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ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

ਰਹਿਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਮੁਝ ਕਉ , ਸਿਖ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਨਾਹਿ



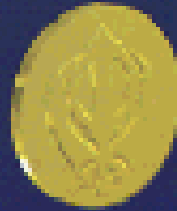
In Search of

THE TRUE GURU

ਚੁਖ ਕੋਬੰਦ ਕਾ । ਰਾਜ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕਾ । ਸਿੱਕਾ ਸੇਨੇ ਕਾ



Khalsa is my identity true



In Khalsa do I reside



Manmukh



To



Gursikh

By: Bhai Rama Singh Ji (from Manmukh to Gursikh)

The Name of *Paramatma* (Universal Spirit) is written in the destiny of every human being from the outset; this realisation comes through the Grace of the Lord (Universal Spirit - One of the many names of God in the Indian Vedic tradition. Many traditional Hindu and Islamic names of God are used in the Sikh Holy Scriptures, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS). However, the Sikh definition of God is as in the basic precept, the *Mool Mantar*, at the beginning of SGGS, and no other).

Before taking birth on this earth, the human soul vows to remember the Lord's Name. Until such time as the child is in the mother's womb it carries on with swas-swas *simran* (utterance of God's Name with each breath). However, after taking birth, caught in the enticing circle of *maya* (Mammon), he forgets *Paramatma* (the Supreme Soul). Bhai Gurdas has made it clear that *Waheguru* (the Wondrous Enlightener) is the *Gurmantar* (Guru's mystical formula) which may be recited by anyone regardless of caste or religion. All the wishes of one who recites this *Gurmantar* are fulfilled. There are two methods for reciting *Waheguru*: the first is to recite the word *Waheguru* and the second to repeat *Waheguru* with every *swas* (life breath). The method for repeating *Waheguru* with every *swas* is taught by the *Panj Piaray* (the Five Beloved Ones - see Glossary). In this way, by doing *swas-swas simraan* in the early morning, a time comes when the *swas* begin to ascend to the forehead (to *thrikuti*, a spot between the eye-brows) and one experiences as follows:

"You brawling, ignorant person of low mentality, reverse your breath and turn it inward. Let your mind be intoxicated with the stream of Ambrosial Nectar which trickles down from the furnace of the *tenth gate* (see *dasam duar* in the Glossary)." (SGGS p. 1123)

In this state, *Waheguru* resides in the *swas* (life breath) and one is unable to speak. *Waheguru simran* (recitation of Waheguru's Name) is continued automatically and subconsciously in the mind. In this state, all thoughts stop. While *simran* continues, first the feet go numb and then the rest of the body. One feels no discomfort while sitting cross-legged. Then, such is the joy of *simran* that time passes unnoticed. When the end of a human being comes, *Waheguru's Naam* (God's Name or Being) which resides in one's *swas* takes one straight to the *Sachkhand* (the ultimate Reality, the Plane of Truth or the Lord's country). If a human being so desires, then he can find a home for *Naam* in his mind. As in India, the string that pulls the water container from a well, cuts a groove on the stone edge of the well; so, if a string can make its permanent mark or groove on a stone, why can't a human being locate (Waheguru's) *Naam* in his *hirda* (inner self - see Glossary)?

Dedicated

On the tercentennial anniversary of the inauguration of the Khalsa Panth to those who recited God's Name, shared their food (earnings) with others, continued with the community kitchen and wielded their sword in defence of the weak and achieved martyrdom.

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Need for publication in English and acknowledgements

While writing *Roop Gobind ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka* in Panjabi, I felt that there was a need for an English translation for the benefit of our next generation and those who cannot read Panjabi. Also, there were many requests for an English translation when the book was published in Panjabi and distributed widely to the global Sikh Sangat. However, the difficulty was in finding a Gursikh whose proficiency in English (to which western educated young Sikhs could relate) matched his in-depth understanding of the Sikh way of life. With Guru Ji's blessing, Sardar Kesar Singh Mand introduced me to Sardar Gurmukh Singh, retired Principal officer from the British civil service. My prayers were answered and this project has now been completed.

I am grateful to Gursikhs from many countries who have given me much encouragement and support to produce this English publication. I would like to thank Sardar Gurmukh Singh Ji for a most readable, accurate and educational translation which will also help the next generation to understand the main *Gurmatt* words and concepts. I also thank Sardar Kesar Singh Ji Mand for his message and continued support and advice. I thank the following for their invaluable support in proof reading: Master Santokh Singh Nijran, Nottingham, Bhai Onkar Singh and Bhai Kuldip Singh, Slough, and Bhai Kamaljit Singh, Bradford. This project could not have been completed without the most dedicated and untiring support of Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji, Bibi Amarjit Kaur and Bibi Jagdeep Kaur Kudhail.

The daily *Ardaas* of this humble servant before Waheguru Ji is to bestow the divine gift of *Naam simraan* and the desire to do *sewa* on all.

Servant of the Sangat

Bhai Rama Singh

A few words about this English publication

There are two main aims of this English translation of Bhai Sahib Bhai Rama Singh Ji's publication in Panjabi: ***Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay Ka, Sikka Sonny Ka*** (*Identity of Gobind, Raj of the Khalsa, Coinage of Gold*).

Firstly, to make this compilation of Bhai Sahib's worldly and spiritual experiences available to those who are either not able to read Panjabi, or who find it easier to read some of the deeper *Sikhi* (Sikh way of life) concepts in English. There is a wealth of guidance here, charming and readable due to Bhai Sahib's simple narrative style. Every effort has been made in this translation to retain that style. Whatever views one may have about the Sikh way of life, one cannot remain unimpressed by Bhai Sahib's honesty and frankness. His message comes from the depths of his soul, about that the reader cannot remain in any doubt. For that reason, this collation of real life experiences of this *Gursikh* (Guru's Sikh) will have a lasting impact on the reader.

The second aim of this translation or, more correctly interpretation, is educational: a "Glossary" of the key Panjabi words used in the Sikh ideology and religious tradition like *sewa, Sangat, Pangat, Naam simran, rehat, Ardaas, matha tekan* etc. has been compiled and the usage of these is shown in the text of the book. The pronunciation has been made as easy as possible, although, due to the limitation of the 26 letters of the English alphabet, it is not possible to entirely satisfy this aspect. Anyone should be able to pick up these words (shown in *italics*) and remember them in the context of their usage. In this way, word-concepts in line with *Gurmatt* (Guru's teaching) can be easily picked up and remembered. To make it easy for the young Sikh and non-Sikh readers, such words have been briefly explained in brackets (as in this introduction) when first used, so that one need not refer to the Glossary every time. Fewer explanations are given in the second half of the book; hopefully, by then, the reader should know the meanings of these commonly used words. This method of presentation may be quite unique and could prove to be a model for acquainting the next generation with the original key *Gurmatt* words and concepts.

In retaining Bhai Sahib Ji's original, simple and attractive personal style, there is less concern for rules of syntax. Bhai Sahib Ji's recitation of own experiences and *Gursikh* episodes are given mostly in the original format. The notes in brackets gives further explanation and background information where this is deemed necessary.

Sometimes, use of *Gurbani* or *Gurmatt* words is also a form of "shorthand" and it saves space. The expression "*matha tekana*" is a very short way for saying, "A way of paying respect to Guru Ji. You approach Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji with folded hands. Then by going down on your knees; and by balancing yourself on the palms of your hands; you bow forward and touch your forehead on the ground. You then stand up with folded hands, bow to the Guru and move away." But if you say "*matha tekana*" to a *Gursikh* then he or she will know immediately what is meant. Words like *kautak* also need proper understanding. *Gurmatt* forbids the performance of miracles or magic. To translate *kautak* by Guru Ji as performance of a miracle would not be appropriate, although, only the discerning reader would know the difference between a *kautak* and a miracle. Therefore, the word has not been translated, although, it has been explained in the Glossary.

There is no gender discrimination (i.e. sex discrimination) in Sikhi. So, care has been taken to use gender neutral words like "humankind" instead of "mankind", "individual", "person" and "one" etc.

However, following the standard usage, unless we keep repeating "he or she", depending upon the intended meaning of the sentence, "he" means "he or she".

Honesty in translation or interpretation is more important than complete agreement with all that is translated. This translation is no exception. Spiritual experience, by its very nature, is personal. **However, it needs to be understood that the central theme of *Gurbani* is to control the aimless wandering of the mind which harms both, worldly and spiritual objectives of this life.** Whether some experiences described by Bhai Sahib Ji can or cannot be explained logically or (psychologically) is to miss the point. *Gurbani* says that everything **is** within His Will and everything can (ultimately) be explained once His *Hukam* (Law or Order or Scheme of Things) is understood. The *Gursikhi* (Sikh way of life) stress in this life is on continual and continuous mind-focus on *Naam*, the All Pervading Presence of The Ultimate Reality, "Waheguru", the One and Only Mystical Formula (*Mantar*) for a *Gursikh*. No power is "supernatural" and no power is greater than the All Powerful Positive One (Ik) Creator (*Oangkaar*). Bhai Sahib's experiences can be of help to those prepared to follow the Guru's spiritual path in humility. The ultimate guidance for *Gursikhs* will always be that of the Guru's Own Word, *Gurbani*; that is Guru Gobind Singh Ji's injunction. I have learnt much during the process of translation and while interpreting *Gurbani* concepts. I thank Bhai Rama Singh Ji for this opportunity. I am also grateful to S. Kesar Singh Ji Mand for persuading and encouraging me to undertake this *sewa*.

Acknowledgements: I owe my gratitude to Bhai Sukhdev Singh, Bibi Amarjit Kaur and Bibi Jagdeep Kaur for their great effort in cross checking the draft with the Panjabi version and suggesting improvements; to my son Inder Bir Singh for giving his views about the style and presentation; and, to my wife Harpal Kaur for her patience and the timely cups of *garam chaa* while I punched away at the PC for long hours.

This *sewa* has been completed is indeed a *kautak* (see Glossary) in view of my total lack of experience for such a task. For this, my *Ardaas* (Prayer) of thanksgiving to Waheguru Ji.

Gurmukh Singh
E-mail sewauk@hotmail.com
January, 2001

Message from Sardar Kesar Singh Ji Mand

Bhai Sahib Rama Singh Ji was born in a Hindu family in 1930. However, his search for the Perfect and True Guru (*Poora Satguru*) which started from a very young age, led him to the path of Gursikhi (*Gursikhi maarg*).

When I first read about Bhai Rama Singh Ji's life experiences in Panjabi (*Roop Gobind Ka; Raj Khalsay Ka; Sikka Sonay Ka*), it became clear to me why he was spiritually attracted to *Gursikhi* (Sikh way of life). His spiritual connection with Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and *Sikhi* went back over previous life cycles. His search was predestined. The spiritual longing for returning to the Guru's path was already there from childhood. How he was able to return to the Guru's fold is a spiritually moving story. Many have read Bhai Sahib Ji's life story in Panjabi and have found much spiritual comfort and guidance as some comments quoted in this book will show.

It is the message of determined pursuance of the Guru's path and complete faith in the Guru that is central to this life story of a Gursikh. No one who reads this book, with whatever Sikh ideological beliefs or belonging to whichever school of thought, can remain untouched by Bhai Rama Singh Ji's simplicity, sincerity and single minded dedication to *Naam simran* and Guru's service (*sewa*). By making his life experiences available to the followers of the Guru's path, Bhai Sahib Ji has done a great service: this publication is an experience based guidance for spiritual progress in this life. The impact on the reader is that much greater seeing that Bhai Sahib Ji was born in a high caste Hindu family and his own path was full of great hardship. Bhai Sahib Ji never wavered from his quest for the True Guru, who then blessed him with *partakh darshan* (experience of divine sight).

This English translation by Sardar Gurmukh Singh Ji, with the most apt title of *In Search of the True Guru*, while retaining full flavour of the original book by Bhai Rama Singh Ji, is a highly educational work. It will benefit thousands of next generation Sikhs and many non-Sikhs. Sardar Gurmukh Singh Ji has explained complex *Gurmatt* words with great clarity for the benefit of western educated next generation Sikhs and non-Sikhs.

I recommend this unique publication to all research students of *Gursikhi*, the Gurus way.

Servant of the Satguru

Kesar Singh Mand (Journalist)
Hayes, Middlesex, England

Message from Harjinder Singh Mander

(Chief Editor, Panjab Times)

While I did not know much about Bhai Rama Singh Ji's life, I was aware that he had been living in England for some years. However, never did I realise that Bhai Sahib Ji's life represented the history of the Sikhs of UK. When I read about his thoughts and sentiments, and about his way of life from the book written by him, I could not remain unimpressed by his unique personality.

Ordinary beings suffer from weaknesses and a lax attitude; and as I was editing the (original Panjabi) book, I also found time for self reflection. The way Bhai Sahib has outlined the life of *Sikhi* (Sikh way of life) and described the lives of Gursikhs, on reading that, an ordinary person would certainly become impatient to adopt *Sikhi*. Although, it is another matter if:

A bamboo does not become fragrant even when growing next to sandalwood.
(SGGS p. 1365)

Like a rock in the middle of a river, such a mentality remains dry from the inside. Otherwise, it cannot be that on reading this book one remains mentally unaffected and hesitates from adopting *Sikhi*. It may be that to some people of a certain type of mentality, some incidents may appear to be over stated. However, for those steeped in spiritual thought and experience, these are blissful experiences.

The fourth part of the book is a unique and wondrous example of the outline concept of Khalsa Raj (*Sikhi* concept of the ideal state). The main objective of this book is to reiterate the Guru's teaching to the Sikhs and to link them to that teaching.

Harjinder Singh Mander
Chief Editor, Panjab Times
Derby UK.

(Original message of March, 1999, in Panjabi.)

Comments from readers

Some extracts from the many letters received by Bhai Rama Singh Ji from the readers of his book, *Roop Govind ka; Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*. The wording in brackets is for clarification.

"After reading the book I could not stop from reproaching myself. I was compelled to think that we are millions of miles away from our true mission. What did our Guru Ji teach us and what are we doing? What form did the *Dasmesh Pita* (Tenth spiritual Father, Guru Gobind Singh Ji) bestow on us and what form are we living in. We have forgotten all the sacrifices He made for us. Not only I, but hundreds of thousands of Sikh youth like me have deviated from the path shown to us (by Guru Ji). To bring these young people back to the right path, it is important that they are made aware of the truth through the right type of preaching. By writing this book you are helping hundreds of thousands in this world. Guidance is given about how to follow the right path and achieve salvation. The path to *Sach Khand* (Waheguru's Court) is shown through the recitation of *Naam* (Waheguru's Name). Whoever reads this book will at least realise own deficiencies and will certainly make efforts to sort out (his or her) remaining life."

(From a letter in Panjabi by Narinder Singh, Spain)

"In my sorrow, I always recall this portion in your book describing the time you were supposed to leave this world and when your soul left your body and travelled off when you asked to see Guru Ji, you were not allowed to because there was something else you had to work on. The stories that you have shared through your book have been truly enlightening and I enjoyed reading it."

(From a letter in English from Bibi Parveen Kaur of Singapore.)

"Baba Ji, this book about your life truly shows the right path to meet *Paramatma* (Supreme Soul). Anyone who reads about your holy life will surely take Amrit and become Guru *wala* (follower of the Guru i.e. Guru's Khalsa) we will distribute your books to Guru's devotees. They will get closer to Satguru Ji after reading about your saintly life."

(Letter in Panjabi from Bhai Mohinder Singh of New Zealand)

"I read your book *Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*. I gained much knowledge after reading it and developed an interest in doing *simran* (recitation of Waheguru's Name). I developed an interest in preaching Gurbani and reciting Sukhmani Sahib. I recite Sukhmani Sahib daily I was so impressed by your book that I read it in a short time. From now I do "Waheguru, Waheguru" *simran*. Please pray for me that Guru Ji bestows on me the gift of *Naam simran* (spontaneous recitation of Waheguru's Name). I have been very much influenced by your book. After reading your book one understands how to live a life of *Sikhi*

(Letter in Panjabi from Bhai Darshan Kumar from Ghotri (Sindh), Pakistan.)

"I was told by my wife to read this book (*Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*). That it was a very good book. Your every story fills one with wonderment and I cannot describe how impressed I was. The first thing which impressed me was that despite belonging to a Hindu family you have come so close to the Guru. We belong to Sikh families, yet we are so far away; this shows clearly that your love for *Paramatma* (Supreme Soul) is true, for which reason you have also experienced *darshan* (divine sight) of Guru Sahib Ji. After reading your book I feel that I have wasted my whole life because it is only now that I understand"

(Letter in Panjabi from Bhai Jaswinder Singh, Jalandhar, Punjab.)

"Bhai Sahib Ji, after reading your book *Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*, a soul full of deficiencies like me has gained much. The teaching is very helpful. I do not have the intellect to write it or describe it. Thanks to your kindness that through your book I have also seen (the *Gursikhi* lives of) other Singhs. You have shown great kindness (by writing this book).
(Letter in Panjabi from Bibi Ranjit Kaur of New Zealand.)

The True Guru

Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego (Guru Gobind Singh Ji).
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
O True Guru! When the Vaisakhi comes I am tearful.
I turn my tear filled eyes towards my Lord, when will He come.
For Whose sake I am distressed, the Lord is not to be seen.
As I shed tears, who will console me now.

Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
My friends ask me, why are you tearful?
Only my mind knows my plight, who knows another's pain?
How shall I speak of my own deeds, how I have wasted my life?
The Lord Who gave me everything, I have not given an abode.

Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
Every moment, life ebbs, youth does not last.
No-one knows about tomorrow, whether tomorrow will come or not.
One day in my dream came the Lord of countless galaxies.
Prepare for *Amrit* (Amrit initiation into Sikhi (see Glossary for Amrit and Sikhi)), for without *rehat* (Sikh discipline (see Glossary)) one cannot be called a Sikh.

Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
From the time I took Amrit, O True Guru I sit in your lap.
The nectar of the True Name showered upon me, I remained not conscious of self.
Recite yourself and persuade others to recite the Name, this the True Guru taught me.
Meditate on the Name with the holy congregation, break the cycle of birth and death.

Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.

Introduction by Bhai Sahib Bhai Rama Singh Ji

Ik Onkar Satgur Prasaad

(One Universal Creator, By the Grace of the True Guru)

"The Lord Himself has stood up to resolve the affairs of the Saints; He has come to complete their tasks." (SGGS p. 783)

This servant is grateful to the Eternal Living Light, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, for granting him the wisdom to write this book (Bhai Rama Singh Ji has referred to himself in the traditional Gursikh way as "daas" (humble servant) instead of using the first person. However, in the remainder of this translation, the first case is used).

In this *Kalyug* (see Glossary), many individuals are wandering around aimlessly. They have no knowledge of the True Guru ("Literal translation of *Puran Guru* is the "Perfect Guru". However, unlike the word "puran" in Panjabi, "perfect" in English has the scope for subjective interpretation. The preference here is to equate the "Perfect Guru" with the One and Only *Sat Guru*, the True Guru as intended, thus avoiding any possible misinterpretation). I too suffered from such ignorance in my youth, looking in many directions for the True Guru. I wandered through many paths to finally reach the true path.

When the *Panj Piaray* (the Five Beloved Ones - see Glossary) in the Guru's Own Image, initiated me to the Khalsa Panth through the *Amrit Sanchar* ceremony, they preached that *sewa* (selfless service), *simran* (meditative recitation of God's Name), charitable acts and humility were the pillars of *Sikhi* (the Sikh way of life). This servant acted on those principles and after studying Gurbani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, took to heart certain precious gems. For example:

From Japji Sahib:

"In the *Amrit Vela*, the ambrosial hours before dawn, chant the True Name, and contemplate on His Glorious Greatness.

From Anand Sahib:

"The saintly beings and the silent sages search for the Ambrosial Nectar; this *Amrit* is obtained from the Guru."

"O my eyes, the Lord has infused His Light into you; do not look upon any other than the Lord."

"O my ears, you were created only to hear the Truth."

From Sukhmani Sahib:

"Meditate, and by meditating continually, find contentment and happiness."

"One, whose eyes do not gaze upon the beauty of other women (i.e. other than own marriage partner)." (*Par tria* should not be interpreted as another's woman in a proprietary sense, as is done by some. In Sikhi, women are not chattels which can be possessed! *Par* in this context means "one who is not your marriage partner" and therefore the word includes all other women who should be treated as mothers, sisters and daughters).

"One whose heart is mercifully blessed with abiding humility, O Nanak, is liberated here, and obtains peace hereafter."

In this way, I followed the Words of the *Satguru* (True Guru) Ji. Any person who follows the teaching of Satguru Ji, will be saved from the cycle of birth and death. I had no intention of writing a book. On one occasion Bhai Balvir Singh met me at a camp. He asked, "Bhai Sahib Ji, I would like to know why you adopted *Sikhi* despite your Hindu background?" I was reluctant to say anything but I could not help mentioning that Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave me his *darshan* (holy sight) and instructed me to partake of *Amrit* initiation and do the *sewa* of *Amrit Sanchar* (see Glossary). Hearing this, he showed much interest and encouraged me to write about my life experiences. That many would benefit from such a publication. In the same way Bhai Satnam Singh and Bhai Prithipal Singh also encouraged me. I thought, that if by writing about my life others can benefit, then an effort should be made.

Few know how exalted the life of the artist Sobha Singh was, except for what can be assessed from his portraits of the Gurus. First he opened his heart to the Gurus and then he painted their portraits. In the same way, first the melodious compositions form in the mind of a *raagi* (professional *Gurbani* singer) and he sings them on the harmonium and is pleased himself; he then conveys that enjoyment to the *Sangat* (Holy Congregation). The *kathakar* (one who preaches *Gurbani* - see *katha* in the Glossary), first studies *Gurbani* and understands it and then wins the hearts of the *Sangat*. A poet forms an idea before writing a poem. Then he selects the right words and composes a poem which he recites to the *Sangat* and feels happy. In the same way, I had a vision (of the Khalsa beau ideals):

"Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsa Ka, Sika Sonha ka."

With Guru Ji's blessing, as I recited Waheguru's Name, I experienced thought flashes which I started noting down.

"I do not know anything about spiritual wisdom, meditation or *karma* (philosophy and rituals), and my way of life is not clean and pure." (SGGS p. 702)

Before starting this book, I prayed to the Living Light, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the Benevolent Provider of unlimited number of qualities, to bestow upon me the effort to realise my aim. This humble servant has experienced four *kautaks* (unusual happenings - see Glossary). First, a divine message in the jungle of Hardwar; second, *darshan* (holy vision) of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji; third, the gift of *simran* (recitation of God's Name) at *Amrit vela* (early morning - see Glossary); and fourth, a vivid dream of Khalsa Raj. All that is written in this book is my own personal experience; the fruit of the labour of dedicated pursuit of spiritual attainment and not something heard from others.

"I am not celibate, nor truthful, nor scholarly. I was born foolish and ignorant into this world." (Rehraas Sahib)

I am not a writer and there will be many shortcomings in my writing. All are liable to err for only the Creator is perfect. A human being will always make mistakes. I apologise to the *Sangat* (Holy Congregation) for any omissions. Please accept what you like in this publication, and write to me if you do not like anything. The purpose of this book is served if any person gains from it. Even if a single individual, on reading this book, partakes of *Khanday Baatay da Amrit* (i.e. undertakes *Amrit*

initiation - see Glossary), starts earning the credit of *Naam Simran* (recitation of Waheguru's Name - see Glossary) and walks on the path to salvation, then the effort of writing this book would have been worthwhile.

I am grateful to all those brothers and sisters who have supported in any way in producing this publication. The names of the following need special mention: Bhai Prem Singh who produced the cover design and the picture of Sri Harmandar Sahib; Bhai Manpreet Singh who produced the picture conception of the underground tunnel; Bhai Sukhdev Singh and Bibi Amarjit Kaur for their support in writing; Bhai Ram Singh Gravesend, Bhai Kesar Singh Mand, Bhai Rajinder Singh Purewal, Bhai Harjinder Singh Mander, Jathedar Balvir Singh and Bhai Bhupinder Singh, Bhai Balkar Singh Dhillon, Bhai Baljinder Singh and Bibi Davinder Kaur Dhand who gave me full support and encouragement in every way.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji *Maharaj* (the Great King), who placed His Benevolent Guiding Hand on my head and blessed me to accomplish this *sewa* (service).

Whatever the Great King inspired me to write, so I have done my best to put on paper. I have written nothing in *haomai* (vanity), but if anyone does get that impression, then I seek forgiveness in all humility.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa; Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

"The Khalsa belongs to the Wondrous Enlightener, Who is always victorious."

Servant of the *Sangat* (Holy Congregation)

Bhai Rama Singh

Sardar Gurmukh Singh

Sardar Gurmukh Singh retired as a Principal officer in the British Civil Service after thirty-four years service. He was the first *sabat surat* Gursikh to represent the UK abroad at official level and has held many responsible positions. He received his *Gurmatt* education from his father, Giani Harchand Singh Ji Bassian, a well known Gursikh *pracharak* of Malaysia. His studies aim to collate constructive interpretation of Guru Nanak's mission in the context of contemporary issues.

PART 1 - CHILDHOOD

Childhood

In front of our house there was a platform where my father would sit and dispense homeopathic medicine. Sometimes, visiting holy men would use the same platform to preach from the Hindu holy books of *Gita* and *Ramayana*. The villagers would listen to the sermons with attentive devotion. I too was very keen and used to listen with great interest.

One day I came home after playing outside and saw my mother and some other ladies washing clothes at the local well. They would first rub soap on the wet clothes and would then beat them with a small piece of wood (*thaapi* - shaped like a small cricket bat). I was curious and asked my mother, "Why are you beating the clothes like that?"

"These clothes are very dirty, I'm beating out the dirt," mother replied and preached, "Those who take birth on this earth but don't meditate on the God's Name, get this kind of punishment from *jamdoots* (angels of death). If you don't remember God, then you too will get the same treatment."

Hearing this I was frightened and at that very moment I started saying '*Haaray-Rama, Haaray-Rama*' (i.e. started reciting the Lord's Name). While doing this *simran* (recitation) I felt great joy and calmness. I felt as if I was about to reap the fruit of the good deeds done in my past life. I was hardly six years old then. A child's first teachers are its parents. A mother is the first person a child learns from.

I heard a sermon from Baba Ratan Das when I was eight. He said that according to the Hindu religion, there were 8.4 million life forms. If a person did not remember God's Name, then that person went through the suffering of all those life forms. Once caught in that cycle of births and deaths, it took a soul millions of years to get out of it. The life span of some life forms e.g. a crow or a snake is quite long. There is only suffering and pain in that cycle of births and deaths and no comfort at all.

Those ruling the world at one time must have done good deeds in their past lives. They were reaping the reward of a good religious living, charity and pilgrimages to holy places in their past lives. However, intoxicated with power, they then forgot God, started doing bad deeds and reaped the punishment in hell. If a person remembers God day and night, he could achieve salvation.

These words of Baba Ram Ratan Das had much impact on me. I thought that as a reward for reading *Gita* and *Ramayana*, I might be reborn in the family of a king in my next life; the wealth and power could make me forget God and I could go to hell as a result. Why shouldn't I meditate on God's Name in this life and achieve salvation? What Baba Ji meant was that we should meditate on the Lord's Name and make this life a success; *simran* (recitation of the Lord's Name) is very important.

One day, when I was about nine years old, I went to buy books from the city of Aligarh, which is about one and a half miles from our village. Upon entering the city, I saw a cart that was overloaded with goods. A horse with blinkers over its eyes was pulling it with great difficulty. Each time the horse slowed down the driver would beat it with a stick. On seeing the plight of this dumb animal, I was much saddened; the poor beast could not express its suffering and was taking all that punishment in silence.

When I returned to the bus station after buying the books, I saw that the horse-cart on which I had come was overcrowded like the cart I had seen earlier. Everyone had bought things from the city and the weight had more than doubled. The cart owner seated everyone and also loaded their luggage. He appeared to be totally unconcerned as to how the poor horse was going to pull all that weight. Each time the horse slowed down, the driver would strike the horse with a leather whip. The horse's back was sore with wounds but the driver kept striking on those wound so that the horse would run faster.

Everyday, during the school recess at mid-day, I would take food to our servant who was working in the fields. One day, I brought the food a little earlier. I saw that while ploughing the field, the servant was hitting the oxen with a stick while swearing at them. At the end of the stick there was a nail. When the oxen behaved stubbornly, he would prod them with the pointed end of the stick. Feeling the pain, the oxen would move faster. I was distressed to see this; that if I did not meditate on the Name of God, I would suffer the same fate.

In the evening, the servant left the oxen at home after giving them water. I noticed that their backs were bleeding. Flies were sitting on the wounds and sucking blood. The oxen were repeatedly whisking away the flies with their tails.

"How can anyone know the pain of another, if there is no compassion and sympathy within?" (SGGS p. 793)

Even human beings do not understand each other's pain; how could these dumb animals? They could not talk about their suffering to anyone. They had wasted the precious gift of their previous human lives, and as a result of bad deeds, they were reborn as animals. Seeing all this I was much saddened and tears rolled down my eyes.

My job was to put fodder before the oxen. While putting a basket of hay in front of each oxen, I started thinking, "Despite working hard all day, all these poor oxen get to eat is chaff and a drink of water and that only once a day!"

O human being! God has given you countless varieties of food to eat and clothing to wear; yet, you remember Him only when you are in distress. To be saved from such a punishment, such a frightening and terrible condition, every human being should start doing *simran* (reciting God's Name) for at least five minutes daily. With the True Guru's grace these five minutes can eventually become five hours of meditation. One only needs to make a start. Bhagat Kabir Ji says in this *salok*:

"Kabir, whether it is for one *ghari* (a time period of 24 minutes), half a *ghari*, or half of that, whatever it is, it is worthwhile to talk to (be in the company of) saintly people." (SGGS p. 1377)

When I adopted *Sikhi*, I beheld the holy *darshan* (sight; also see Glossary) of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

While I was doing *paatth* (reading Gurbani with reverence) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the following lines reminded me of those oxen. What Kabir Sahib Ji says in the following *shabad* (hymn) is true:

"With four feet, two horns and a mute mouth, how could you sing the Praises of the Lord?
Standing up and sitting down, the stick shall still fall on you, so where will you hide your head? ||
1 || Without the Lord, you are like a stray ox; with your nose torn, and your shoulders injured, you

shall have only the straw of coarse grain to eat. || 1 || Pause || All day long, you shall wander in the forest, and even then, your belly will not be full. You did not follow the advice of the holy men, and so you shall obtain the fruits of your actions. || 2 || Enduring pleasure and pain, drowned in the great ocean of doubt, you shall wander in numerous reincarnations. You have lost the jewel of human birth by forgetting God; when will you have such an opportunity again? || 3 || You turn on the wheel of reincarnation, like an ox at the oil-press; the night of your life passes away without salvation. Says Kabir, without the Name of the Lord, you shall smite your head, and repent. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 524)

In this *shabad*, Kabir Ji says that if one is born an animal, then how can that dumb creature recite God's Name? It is only as a human being that one can make life a success and achieve salvation. I was filled with grief. I thought that I should remember God, otherwise I too would suffer the same fate as the oxen. An inner voice was telling me to meditate. The next day the oxen went through the same ordeal. When I looked at them, I was filled with such sorrow, that after giving food to the servant, I did not return home. Instead, I started walking towards the jungle. I found a place in the jungle where no one could see me. There I started reciting '*Haaray- Rama*',' *Haaray- Rama*'. I was feeling frightened; I took off my shirt and tied it over my eyes. While I continued meditating, time passed and it was evening. I could hear the sound of animals and birds returning to their homes. It was winter. A cold breeze was blowing and it was drizzling. My mind wavered, that I should run home; however, I felt as if some mysterious force was holding me back.

Due to the cold, I did not fall asleep the whole night as I did not have any warm clothes with me. With God's Grace I did not even realise the passage of time while meditating. I began to enjoy reciting '*Haaray Rama*, *Haaray Rama*'. It was dawn and I could hear the sweet chirping of the birds waking up. As the sun rose, I started feeling very hungry. I began to realise that it was not easy to remember God's Name. I wondered what to do; should I go home or not? If I went home, I would get a scolding but if I didn't, I would die of hunger!

I was still sitting there until 5 o' clock in the evening. Finally, I returned home in fear. The whole family was worried. My father was very angry and asked me, "Where have you been? We've been looking for you since yesterday?"

I said, "Father, a voice from inside me was telling me to meditate. I felt very sad and that is why I went to the jungle to do *simran*."

Hearing this, father cooled down a bit. Mother came in. She also had been worried about me. Father told her that I had gone to meditate at such a young age. He advised me that one should recite God's Name in old age. In any case, what was I so frightened of that I had started meditation at such a young age. He told me, "This time we forgive you because you have mentioned the Name of *Raam* (God), but if you go away again you will be punished!"

A Selfish World

An old man lived in our village and had two sons. As time passed, he thought of sharing his property between them. The money from the sale of his land was divided equally and given to them. At that time I was about ten years old.

Time passed. For a while the daughters-in-law served him well. Later they started complaining, "Sometimes he demands hot food, sometimes he falls sick or suffers from some other ailment, he is a burden on us." He felt very sad listening to all this and realised that it was his own fault because he had given away all his money to them. No one bothered taking care of him anymore, thinking that there was nothing more to be gained.

One day he became very sick and came to see my father for medicine. He told my father that he was given only left over food that was not healthy. He asked my father to give him some good medicine so that he could get well soon.

My father gave him the medicine and also suggested a solution to his problems. He put some stones in a clay pot and put 20 silver rupee coins on top of the stones. He told the old man, "Take this home. After you show it to your family, return the money to me."

When the daughters-in-law saw the clay pot they asked him about its contents.

He replied, "I had some money buried in the ground, but I thought that if I died, nobody would know about it. That's why I brought it home, so that you will know about it, and can have it after I die."

The daughters-in-law were very happy, and thought that their father-in-law had lots of money. They began to take good care of him. He returned the silver rupees to my father and hid the pot of stones under his bed. In those days there were no banks and people kept their money in their homes. The old man put two locks on the door to his room, and locked them both whenever he went out. From then on, he started receiving good service. One daughter-in-law would say, "Father, today I have made *karah*' (a sweet dish, see also *karah prasad* in the glossary) for you!" The other one would say, "I have made rice and special curry for you!"

Before, no one would bother about washing his clothes. Now, he started receiving washed clothes regularly. He thought how selfish the world was. Only wealth and not human beings received respect. A person was popular, if he had money. Otherwise no one really bothered. He came to my father and thanked him saying, "Nowadays I am looked after very well." And so time passed.

When the old man died, the family carried his body, together with his bed, out of the house. When they got hold of the clay pot under the bed, to their surprise and dismay, all that they found in the pot were stones!

Sunt Samooh Anek Mati Kay

(Men of God belong to many schools)

"I have seen many abodes, where groups of Sarogis, Sudhs, Sidhs, Yogis and Jains reside.

(Sarogis are a sect of Jains, Sudhs are those who remain clean, while Sidhs are those who possess occult powers).

(I have also seen) various groups of the brave men and demons, gods who drink nectar, and other saints, belonging to various sects.

I have noticed (religions of) different countries, but none seems to be (the religion) of (preaching worship of) the Creator (by which the soul becomes His slave).

All these are worthless, if these men do not earn the kind Glance and Love of God and faith in Him." (Patshahi 10 Tav-parsaad Sawaiyae)

One day, a *saadhu* (holy man) came to our village. He went about naked even in freezing cold. In his desire to meet God, he went through austerities beyond the imagination of an ordinary person. The villagers would take food for this *saadhu*, and, after placing some money in front of him, they would bow to him. For his taste, he would eat finely ground food, but before it could reach his stomach and be digested, he would drink a large quantity of water and vomit the water mixed with undigested food out into an iron container. His followers would then dispose of the contents of the container in the fields. He had control over his internal organs including bowels and bladder, so that he had no need to relieve himself. His body was all bones and he looked quite frightening. In Hinduism, this is believed to be one of the ways of attaining God.

"If I perform hundreds of thousands and millions of religious rituals—still, all these are not equal to the Name of the Lord." (SGGS p. 62)

"Some go and sit in the forest realms, and do not answer any calls. Some, in the dead of winter, break the ice and immerse themselves in freezing water. Some rub ashes on their bodies, and never wash off their dirt. Some look hideous, with their uncut hair matted and dishevelled. They bring dishonour to their family and ancestry. Some wander naked day and night and never sleep. Some burn their limbs in fire, damaging and ruining themselves. Without the Name, the body is reduced to ashes; what good is it to speak and cry then? Those who serve the True Guru, are embellished and exalted in the Court of their Lord and Master." (SGGS p. 1284)

This *saadhu* also kept a vow of silence. He would not speak to anyone. I went to see him. There was always a crowd of people around him. I thought to myself, "This is a difficult path in search of God. How can this man meet God? He does not recite the Name of God but remains entrapped in his own rituals. Instead of enjoying the taste of *Naam* (God's Name), he tastes food." I became even more disillusioned.

At that time, I was in search of salvation. But after coming to the path of *Sikhi*, I realised that Guru Nanak Dev Ji's path was the simplest of all. While being a householder, one can meditate on the Lord.

"O Nanak, meeting the True Guru, one comes to know the Perfect Way. While laughing, playing, dressing and eating, he is liberated." (SGGS p. 522)

Three Impostor Saadhus (Holy Men)

I was eleven when one day, my father was reading the Gita before a large congregation. Two *saadhus* (holy men) came into the gathering looking for the *bhagat* (devotee) of Mahadev (another name for Shiva, one of the three Hindu god-heads; the other two being Brahma and Vishnu). They inquired if any of us had seen him. According to them, this *bhagat* was a *brahamgiani* (at one with God) and Lord Mahadev always appeared by his side. Whatever he uttered would come to pass. Sometimes, while meditating, he would disappear.

One of the two *saadhus* became very emotional and said that he could not live without the *bhagat* of Mahadev. Seeing such display of emotional devotion, the villagers thought that the *bhagat* of Mahadev must really be a very accomplished person and that they should help to search for him. The two *saadhus* went to the neighbouring villages and repeated the same story there. All the villagers were convinced that the *bhagat* of Mahadev must be nearby.

The two men set up their abode in the middle of four or five villages. They filled three large skin bags of water and buried these in the ground. Their leader who had been missing so far, joined them and sat in a meditative pose. The villagers were then led to believe that the *bhagat* of Mahadev had appeared. People from the surrounding villages gathered at that place.

The *bhagat* was meditating at the time. When he opened his eyes, he announced that Lord Mahadev told him that at that spot the rivers Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati would meet. He then struck a *tarshul* (a spear, the special head of which is symbolic of the Hindu faith) at the spot where the three water-filled skin bags of water were buried. As the water spouted out, people started bowing in reverence to the fake *bhagat*. He announced that the place was sacred. That holy rivers Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati had appeared there and Lord Mahadev had blessed the place. He added that Lord Mahadev would be pleased if a temple and a sacred pool were to be constructed there without delay. With the water of the three holy rivers, the green fields would flourish.

But first, the villagers were told to construct a wooden platform for sitting. When the Lord was pleased then everyone would be able to see him. The *bhagat* got the platform constructed in such a way that one man could sit underneath it. At night, one of his helpers would stand guard while the other would sit underneath the platform. The *bhagat* would wrap himself in a blanket and sit on the platform. The person beneath the platform would pass a fake snake-like rubber rope to him, which he swung around his neck making it look like a real snake. The naive people thought that Lord Mahadev's snake had appeared.

In those days, there was no arrangement for electricity. People used lanterns or oil-lamps. The *saadhus* had lit a lantern and kept the people away from the *bhagat*, saying that snakes came to him. People were kept outside a large circle so that they could not look too closely. The *bhagat* had hidden a small light bulb on his head (hidden in his matted hair locks) and his assistant under the seat operated it by connecting the wires to batteries. The other assistant standing outside would chant "Har, Har Mahadev!" and all the people gathered there would repeat after him "Har, Har Mahadev!" People's faith in the *bhagat* increased. They decided that the temple and sacred pool should be built without delay and started collecting money for this worthy project.

One day the headman of the village came to see the *bhagat* who said to the headman, "O devotee! Lord Mahadev is very pleased with you and you will find five silver rupees under a stone near a certain tree." The *bhagat's* helpers had already placed the money there. The headman dug up the area and found the five rupees. He was very happy; he was impressed that the *bhagat* was all-knowing and went to see him with the money he found. The *bhagat* asked him to donate the money to Lord Mahadev and with the Lord's blessings, he would receive ten rupees the following week and gold coins in the fourth week!

The headman's faith in the *bhagat* increased and day and night he started collecting money for the *bhagat* with great enthusiasm. He even donated his wife's gold ornaments because he was convinced that in the fourth week, he would be getting gold coins. The following week he found ten rupees as foretold and he donated this money to the *bhagat*. The *bhagat* told him, "Lord Mahadev is so pleased with you that wealth will not be exhausted in your family for ten generations. Do service of the Lord (i.e. collect funds) whole-heartedly. Do not tell this to anyone or the benefit will go to some other person."

The headman got together the most influential men in the village and started making a door to door collection. The villagers donated willingly and gave whatever they had. Some ladies even gave their gold ornaments. People in the villages believed that Lord Mahadev himself was present when the *bhagat's* head lit up. Everybody was eager and pleased to get a *darshan* (holy sight) of the *bhagat* for making this life a success (The main purpose of human life is to seek salvation and the traditional belief is that *darshan* (holy sight) of a deity is a step towards achieving this goal).

At night, the headman would place a sack for the villagers to put their donations in. When the people left for their homes, one of the *bhagat's* assistants would keep the money in a safe place. This went on for three weeks. The water in the skin-bags placed underground, was beginning to dry up. One night, the fake *saadhus* took all the money and gold and slipped away. People saw that the *bhagat* was not there. They were at first frightened to see a snake under the wooden seat. However, a closer inspection revealed that the snake was made of rubber. They dug up where the water was seeping through and found three skin-bags.

Then people realised that the *saadhus* were really tricksters. The headman went to the place where he was to receive the gold coins and found only an empty pot. He cursed his bad luck in dismay, for he had given away all his savings. He filed a report with the police. When the police asked him for descriptions, he was unable to tell them anything because the *saadhus* had always covered their faces with ashes.

Nowadays, even well educated people get defrauded in this way. May God save us from such false holy men.

Saadhus of the Jain Faith

(Saadhu: A Hindu ascetic holy man)

"You may practice techniques of inner cleansing and all sorts of yogic postures; you may adopt the self-mortifying ways of the Jains and great spiritual disciplines." (SGGS p. 265)

After some time, a group of *saadhus* (holy men) belonging to the Jain faith came to our house. They had two disciples with them. One day, one of the disciples said to the master, "*Baba Ji* (O' wise one), it has been two years since I've been in your service but you have not initiated me as a Jain priest as yet. Please bless me.

Baba Ji replied, "You have already been blessed. In two days time, it'll be the birthday of our elder master. I will initiate you then." Baba Ji turned to me and requested, "Ram, go and bring some ash from the fireplace." I told my mother that Baba Ji was asking for ash. She put some into a small bowl, which I brought to Baba Ji, thinking that maybe he wanted to clean his teeth (before the arrival of toothpaste in India, many people used charcoal or ash to clean their teeth).

Babaji said, "This is not enough! I need a big bucketful." I thought to myself, "A big bucketful! Maybe Babaji wants to mix it with water and drink it instead of having his meal!" I told my mother that Babaji wanted a big bucket of ashes. She immediately took a bucket and went from house to house collecting ash. The neighbouring ladies started giggling remarking, "Lachmi Devi, we have heard of people asking for a cup of *aata* (flour) but you are asking for *swah* (ash)!" My mother said that Baba Ji wanted ash.

When the bucket was full, I brought it to Baba Ji. His fellow *saadhus* seated the new disciple down and started scrubbing his head with ash. By rubbing ash into the head, the roots of the hair become weak and it becomes easier to pluck the hair without too much bleeding. Whenever there was any bleeding, they would cover it with more ash. As they plucked the poor boy's hair, he fainted. Baba Ji said to me, "Ram, go and get some milk." I went into the kitchen and saw that my mother had boiled some milk for making curd. I took some milk from the pot. After drinking the milk, the new disciple regained consciousness and said, "If I had known that it was going to be so difficult, I wouldn't have asked to become a Jain *saadhu*." Baba Ji replied, "To gain salvation from the cycle of birth and death, it is necessary to go through a little pain."

The next day, they gave him a bath and then Baba Ji covered his mouth with a cloth and said, "Your parents are blessed because you have accepted the Jain faith. Dharamraj, who judges every one's deeds, will be very pleased with you for the good you have done. By covering your mouth, no flies or other insects can fly into it and so you would not be committing any sin. Dharamraj will send you straight to heaven when he sees this cloth covering your mouth." According to the Jain faith, this is the way to salvation and acceptance in God's Court. I consider myself fortunate that God has shown me the uselessness of such rituals.

Whenever any holy men came to our village, the villagers would send them to our house where they were well looked after. Another *saadhu* came. His vow was to remain standing throughout his life. This is also one way of meeting God according to the Hindu faith. It requires great will power (*hatth*). This *saadhu* had remained standing for twelve years! It is very difficult for an ordinary person to do this.

Yet another *saadhu* came. He had a *tilak*, mark painted on his forehead, and was imitating the God, Inder. When food was ready my mother asked me to invite the *saadhu* to eat. When I went to call him he was busy grinding sandalwood for the *tilak* on his forehead. He took at least half an hour but not once did he utter the name of Ram. He told me, "It is my routine that I paint a *tilak* mark first and then have my meals." I asked, "Baba Ji, why do you paint a *tilak*?" He replied in irritation, "You are still a child, why do you need to know?" I answered, "Some day, I would want to paint a *tilak* too."

Then he told me that, Dharamraj respected the *tilak* and sent those wearing one straight up to heaven. I found this to be an easier way to reach God, but then I thought that, if this was true, then everyone could put on a *tilak* to go to heaven. Why take the trouble to meditate? I realised that this was merely a superstition. When, in my early childhood, I spent a night in the jungle reciting 'Haaray Raam, Haaray Raam', I felt much closer to God. Later, after much wandering and searching, I was finally convinced by *Gurbani* (Guru's Word in Sri Guru Granth Sahib), that without reciting *Naam* (meditation on God's Being through recitation of His Name) there was no place in the God's court. Only through recitation of *Naam* can one achieve salvation.

"Says Nanak, this is the essence of Truth: without the Lord's meditation, there is no salvation."
(SGGS p. 144)

One day, a *saadhu* called Lachman Das came. He could hold his breath in the *dasam dwar* (the "tenth gate" located in the mind, see also the Glossary)). He preached that this was the first step towards meeting God. He said it took him thirty years to reach this stage. I thought to myself, "I would like to meet a saintly person who can really show me the right path to God?" All the holy men were showing different paths. However, my conclusion from what they all seemed to be saying was, that the holy man who would teach me to recite 'Haaray Raam', would be showing me the correct path to God.

Celibacy as a way to salvation

Once two *brahamchari* (celibate holy men) came. They preached that to gain salvation, it was very important to abstain from recreation. They stressed it was impossible to gain salvation as a married householder. They said that there were three methods of becoming a *brahamchari*: first, to hang upside down in the jungle and tie the sex organ tightly so that it became impotent; second, to take certain drugs to achieve impotency; and third, to drink a mixture of coriander and poppy seed, soaked overnight in water and ground together in the morning.

I thought to myself, "This isn't the path to salvation either." My young mind thought that maybe by staying a celibate, salvation can be achieved; but if everyone followed this path, the world would come to an end because no one would ever be born. An attempt to end God's plan in this way would be a big sin. I was not satisfied with this *brahamchari* way.

Gurbani has made it clear that even after using all these methods, a man still remains lustful:

"The heart of the sinner is filled with unfulfilled sexual desire. He cannot control his fickle mind. || 1 || Pause || The Yogis, wandering ascetics and renunciates — this net is cast over them all. || 1 || Those who contemplate the Name of the Lord cross over the terrifying world-ocean. || 2 || Servant Nanak seeks the Sanctuary of the Lord. Please bestow the blessing of Your Name, that he may continue to sing Your Glorious Praises. || 3 ||" (SGGS p. 1186)

In Guru Nanak Dev Ji's words, lust cannot be overcome without *Naam*.

Worship of Shiv-Ling and Worship of Sayiad

(Continuation in the Hindu tradition of the primitive form of phallus worship.)

The ritualistic ways of many Indian sects are so empty of any real teaching sometimes. Some believe that by doing certain rituals, salvation and heaven can be achieved. For example, they do the worship of Shiv-ling, the symbolic nature of which is obscene to say the least (and derives from ancient cults). Such worship cannot be seriously regarded as the way to salvation. It is not so cheap.

Some people worship Sayiad (an Islamic saint). A drum is beaten and the villagers gather around. They then go to a tomb where they offer sacrifice of an egg. This path to salvation also seemed easy to me. However, I was not satisfied with any of these ways. My search for the true way to meet God continued. I felt that I would surely find my destination some day. The teachings of *Gurbani* removed all my doubts and my body and mind were refreshed when I came to understand the Tenth Master's hymn:

Some worship stones or put them on their heads, and some suspend lingams (small stone idols) from their necks.

Some claim to see God in the south, and some bow their heads towards the west.

Some fools worship idols or proceed to worship the dead.

The whole world, being in the grip of false ceremonies, has not known God's secrets.

(Patshahi 10 Twai-persad Sewaiyae)

The Five Fires

As a Hindu, I saw many strange practices. It is necessary to mention the ritual of the five fires. To overcome the five vices of kaam (lust), krodh (anger), lobh (greed), moh (attachment) and *ahankar* (ego), some *saadhus* sit under the blazing sun in June and burn five fires around them. They tell people that by doing so, the five evil vices are destroyed and the mind becomes pure. They also spread a blanket in front of the fires as an invitation to those who come to see them to donate money. I found this to be nothing but a devious way of collecting money. The sight of fires in that hot sun seemed so strange.

I am ever grateful to Gurbani, which speaks so clearly of such people in the following *shabad* (Gurbani hymn):

"They beat the drums for the sake of bread. They throw themselves upon the ground."
(SGGS p. 465)

In Banaras, the suicidal saw in the well of salvation!

"His mind's desires may lead him to go and dwell at sacred places of pilgrimage, and offer his head to be sawn off; but this will not cause the filth of his mind to depart, even though he may make thousands of efforts" (SGGS p. 642)

According to the Hindu faith, Banaras is considered to be the city of the deity Shiva i.e. a sacred city. Some *pundits* (Hindu priests) had located a saw in one of the wells there. There are people who think that salvation can be bought. When wealthy people in search of salvation approached these cunning pundits they were not spared. The pundits would preach, "If you desire salvation, then you must sacrifice everything." When a person agreed to do this, the pundits would take him to the well in which was placed a saw. The pundits would brainwash the unfortunate victim to jump onto the steel saw. And so the ignorant person would jump in and get sawn into two halves. The pundits took possession of all the person's belongings.

This went on for many years. It so happened that the ghost of one such victim returned to haunt the pundit responsible for his death. The ghost said, "I came to you for salvation but you turned me into a ghost. Now I shall give you salvation!" Hearing this, the priest became very frightened and told the other pundits about this threat. One day, the angry ghost threw the pundit into the well. Seeing this, the other pundits were frightened and decided that they should mend their ways or they would suffer the same fate.

Donation of a cow to charity

Once, a woman neighbour of ours, was very ill. There was no hope of her recovery. Her family asked a *pundit* (Hindu priest) what they should do to ensure her salvation. The pundit suggested donation of a cow. The sick woman would cross over from this life to heaven, holding the cow's tail. Accordingly, the family members bought a cow and called the pundit. He asked them to bathe the cow and bring it close to the sick woman. He started reciting sacred words. Neighbours gathered around the woman's bedside. The cow was ill tempered. When the woman's son tried to hold the cow's tail and place it in his mother's hand, the cow got frightened and kicked the boy hard (at short range and out of sight!). The boy started screaming in anguish. People thought that the mother was dead. The other members of the family also started wailing. The woman, still very much alive, sat up and said, "I am still alive, but you've already started crying for me!"

I was watching this drama. I thought to myself, "How can a person gain salvation by holding on to a cow's tail? A human being ranks at the top of the (mythical) 8.4 million forms of life. A person can only achieve salvation by *sewa* (selfless service in humility), *simran* (recitation of *Naam*) and prayers. An animal has no knowledge of this. Then how can it help to save human souls?"

Nowadays, people do not want to do anything themselves and are always looking for a shortcut. O' human being! You are the highest of all life forms. If you desire salvation, then meditate and do service. In this way you will benefit and achieve salvation.

"This human body has been given to you. This is your chance to meet the Lord of the Universe. Nothing else will work. Join the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy; meditate on the Jewel of the Naam. || 1 || Make every effort to cross over this terrifying world-ocean. You are squandering this life uselessly in the love of *Maya* (attachment to worldly wealth and relationships). || 1 || Pause || I have not practised meditation, self-discipline, self-restraint or righteous living. I have not served the saintly people; I have not acknowledged the Lord, my King. Says Nanak, my actions are contemptible. O Lord, I seek Your Sanctuary; please, preserve my honour." (SGGS p. 12)

In the above hymn Guru Arjan Dev Ji says, "O man, you have been blessed with a human body. In this life, meditate on the Lord's Name and make your life a success."

Bathing the Statue of Mahadev

Some devotees go to Hardwar hoping to achieve salvation. They are told by the Brahmins that salvation can be secured by bathing the statue of the deity Mahadev with the water from Ganges and by giving generously to charity (i.e. to them!). There is a condition that the water should be collected from Hardwar by foot and not placed on the ground. Two persons take turns doing this. When one person gets tired, the other takes over. And so they reach their destination without resting the pot on the ground. Some devotees perform this service every year.

Some devotees go to Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna. They make their journey by crawling on their bellies all the way from their villages to Mathura. This pilgrimage takes them years to complete. They prostrate to salute and ask Lord Krishna for salvation. By doing such penance, salvation is not achieved but some benefit is perhaps derived. The body may receive some comforts in the next life.

Donation of a Bed to Charity

I was about 12 years old when my grandmother passed away. My mother and I went to Hardwar with her ashes. My father could not go because of work so I had to accompany my mother. We stayed at a pundit's house in Hardwar. He explained the procedure for the ritual of throwing the ashes into Ganges. First my head would have to be shaved, leaving only a lock called *bodi* on the top. Only then could I dispose of my grandmother's ashes into the water of Ganges. There was a barber seated next to him. I did not want to keep a *bodi* and argued, "Why is it important to keep a *bodi*?" He replied, "You are a Brahmin (high caste priest class usually called pundits when practising as priests) and you will get respect by keeping a *bodi*. When you die and go before Dharamraj, he will regard you as a disciple of Narad Muni and send you straight to heaven. It is important for that reason." And so the barber shaved my head. When he put a mirror in front of me, I did not like my looks. I went out and bought a hat and put it on. As we were throwing the ashes into the water, the priest started reciting some *mantras* (*Vedic psalms*). Later he asked for five rupees, which in those days had much value. He then said, "It is also necessary to donate a bed and bed-clothes. Grandmother will need a bed and bed-clothes to sleep." There was a readily available bed with bed-clothes with him so we paid for the items. Then he said the prayers for my grandmother's salvation.

Another family arrived. He conducted the same ritual for them and asked them to donate a bed and bed-clothes as well. We saw that he was using the same bed and bed-clothes each time. There was bound to be a fight in heaven as to which person the bedding belonged to! We do not know how many people paid the price of this same bed before us. This is all hypocrisy. Even amongst the Sikhs, such a ritual has started. There is a need to put a stop to this.

For their livelihood, the pundits have started many rituals like offering food to Brahmins (Pundit means a Brahmanic scholar. Pundits belong to the Brahmin caste, which is the highest in the oppressive and divisive Indian caste system introduced by Mannu, and the words pundit and Bhahmin are interchangeable) in honour of the dead, blanket donation, utensils donation, cow donation, money donation, bed donation etc. Their belief is that when people die, they will need these things in the next world. Pundits ask for such donations from the Hindus but the Sikhs are themselves giving such donations without being asked. So what is the difference between the pundits and the Sikhs? Would the dead receive these items in the next world? Never!

A person who has never given anything to charity or shared anything with the needy during this life, what can that person expect in the next world? If a person has not done good deeds, meditation and charity in this life and, as a result, Dharamraj puts him into the cycle of 8.4 million life forms, how can the chanty and donations of his future generations help him? There are 4.2 million life forms in the water. They do not need any blanket, utensils or money. Then what is the use of such donations? Except for the human form, all other forms of life do not utilise such commodities.

If a person has not done any charity or good deeds during his lifetime but is born a human being again due to some past deed, he will be born in a poor family. Charity given by the families of a dead person will only benefit those families and not the dead soul. This is because they have given charity with their own hands. The pundits and (priests of other sects) have put the superstition in people's mind that if the ashes of a dead person are disposed off in Hardwar, the dead person will attain salvation. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji says in his *Bani*:

"All other efforts are punished by the Messenger of Death, who accepts nothing at all, except meditation on the Lord of the Universe." (SGGS p. 266)

Meaning that other than meditation on the Lord's name, there is no route to salvation. Dharamraj does not even give an iota of recognition to any rituals or deeds other than meditation. Some Sikhs also follow the ways of the pundits and insist on discarding a dead person's ashes only at Patalpuri (at Kiratpur Sahib, near Anandpur Sahib in Panjab). Some people may never have visited Anandpur Sahib during their lifetime but their ashes are brought there. Such a ritual is futile. It is not important to discard the ashes at Patalpuri. Any river with running water will do. The person who has brought the ashes to Gurdwara Sahib will definitely benefit by going into the Gurdwara and bowing before Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The dead soul will only benefit from the charity and deeds done during own lifetime. Gursikhs should ask themselves, "Have not the Hindu rituals crept into our way of doing things?"

Satguru Ji (the True Guru) has denounced all these hypocritical practices but some Sikhs have not acted on Guru Ji's words. Likewise, there are people who send money for *Paatths* (complete reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji), to be done in their name. They may benefit from the charity of sending money, but they will not receive the full benefit of the *Paatth*, because they did not listen to the *Paath*.

"All Your Sikh followers come to worship and adore You; they sing the sublime Bani of the Lord. Their singing and listening is approved by the Lord; who accept the Order of the True Guru as True, totally True." (SGGS p. 669)

Some Sikhs arrange for *Paatths* at home but nobody sits down to listen. The ladies are busy preparing *langar* (food for the congregation) in the kitchen and do not have time to listen to *Bani* (short for *Gurbani* meaning the Guru's Word). If you have not listened to the *Bani*, how can you derive any benefit from it? True, you will benefit from the service performed during and on completion of the *Paatth* (e.g. *langar* and looking after the *Sangat*, the holy congregation). However, the spiritual benefit of listening to *Gurbani* will not be received. If you arrange for a *Paatth* at home then do listen to *Gurbani* as much as you can.

Saraadh

(Offering of food, clothes etc. to Brahmins for the benefit of dead ancestors.)

During the thirteen days of *saraadh*, food is first fed to the crows. When the days of *saraadh* came, my mother made a variety of food and placed it on leaves. She then asked me to take the food to the rooftop and sit beside it. She also gave me a stick and told me to feed this food only to crows and not allow other birds near it. Only when the crows had eaten would I be allowed to eat my food.

The belief is, that because crows have a very long life, if they eat the food first, the food would reach the dead ancestors. For the first two days, the crows came quickly to eat the food but on the third day, no crows came. This was because there was food available to them on every roof-top. It started getting late. I was getting hungry sitting under the hot sun. I asked myself, "How much longer should I wait? Maybe, the crows won't come at all!"

I got tired of waiting and ate the food myself. I thought how superstitious the people were to think that the food eaten by the crows would reach the dead ancestors. The dead may even be dwelling in other life forms. However, the crows, dogs and other animals were certainly getting their fill due to these superstitious rituals. As Gurbani says:

"Why offer camphor to a crow? Why give the snake milk to drink?" (SGGS p. 481)

"He came and he went, and now, even his name has died. After he left, food was offered on leaves, and the birds were called to come and eat. O Nanak, the self-willed *manmukhs* (see Glossary) love the darkness. Without the Guru, the world is drowning." (SGGS p. 138)

Guru Nanak Dev Ji says that a dead person will not receive anything in this manner. Only misled people follow such rituals. Bhagat Kabir Ji says

"He does not honour his ancestors while they are alive, but he holds feasts in their honour after they have died. Tell me, how can his poor ancestors receive what the crows and the dogs have eaten up?" (SGGS p. 332)

While the parents are alive, people do not take care of them nor give them proper clothes and food. They wish that their parents would die quickly. When this happens, they carry on with these rituals only to please the public. What is the use of such rituals when they do not benefit the dead? Only the crows and dogs eat the food.

Duni Chand, a resident of Lahore performed *saraadh* every year. Once, Guru Nanak Dev Ji was also present at his gathering. Guru Ji told Duni Chand, "Your father is sitting hungry for the past three days. He has not received the benefit of this ritual." Duni Chand asked Guru Ji where his father was. Guru Ji replied, "Five *koh* (*koh* is about one mile) from here, he is sitting in the jungle in the form of a wolf. Take some food to him and don't be frightened because with your arrival he will acquire a human mind and eat the food."

Duni Chand went into the jungle and saw the wolf sitting impatiently. He placed the food before the wolf and it acquired the sense of a human. Duni Chand asked, "You were an upright and good person, how did you get the life of a wolf?" His father replied, "I did not have a true Guru. That is

why this has happened to me. When my end was drawing near, our neighbours were cooking some meat and I could smell it. I wanted to eat the meat, and because my mind was thinking of meat when I died, I was reborn as a wolf."

By receiving the food from Duni Chand, his father was released from the life cycle of a wolf. Duni Chand returned home and bowed at the feet of Guru Ji and asked for his blessing that his present life and next life be reformed. Guru Ji blessed him with *Naam*.

Naag Panchmi - (Snake Worship)

At a young age, along with other rituals I also got to know about *Naag Panchmi*. On this day, people pray to the Snake god. My mother gave me a small coin, and told me to go to the shop to get a picture of *Naag Bhagwan*, the snake god. All the copies were sold out in the shops. I came back and told my mother. She was upset and said, "Go and look for it again and get it from anywhere you can." I wondered where to get the picture from.

Thinking about this, I walked out to the shops again. I met my friend who asked, "My dear fellow, why do you look so sad?" I replied, "My mother asked me to buy a picture of Naag Bhagwan, but it is sold out in the shops. Where can I get it from?" My friend said, "Don't worry. The shopkeeper gave me two by mistake and you can have one."

I brought the picture home and gave it to my mother. That day, my mother prepared many dishes. She placed the food before the picture of Naag *Devta* (deity) and prayed for the protection and well-being of the family. I wondered, "How can a snake full of poison protect anybody?" I regarded this to be a superstition also. What peace can be obtained from a snake?

"The mind of the self-willed manmukh is not softened; his consciousness is totally polluted and stone-hearted. Even if the venomous snake is fed on milk, it shall still be filled with poison." (SGGS p. 755)

It so happened that some time later that day, a snake suddenly appeared from nowhere and we were all frightened. The Naag Bhagwan we were praying to, and from whom we were asking for protection, was now threatening our lives. My father overcame his fear, got hold of a stick and completed the *Naag Panchami* ritual by crushing the snake's head! I learnt a lesson from this incident and freed my mind from such a superstitious belief.

The worship of Kali Maaee - (Kali Maaee: Mother or Goddess Kali)

About five miles from our village, there is a temple devoted to the worship of goddess Kali where a carnival is held annually. Villagers go together in processions to this temple. They are led by a flag-bearer carrying the black flag of Kali and they stop a short distance from the temple. To please Kali, some people pierce needles into their throats. Those who have sinned beg for forgiveness from Kali by hitting themselves on their backs with chains.

I recall one *saadhu* lying on a bed of sharp thorns in a carriage. People wondered why the thorns were not piercing him. The *saadhu* said that he had the protection of Kali. That is why he didn't feel any pain. Then there was a group of womenfolk in the procession. Those women who did not have babies, each carried a clay baby doll. They prayed to Kali to grant them children. Everyone was shouting loudly, "Hail Kali Maaee!" There was an Englishman taking photographs of this strange procession. He was astonished. He asked an English-speaking person what was going on. The person explained that the people were trying to please the Goddess Kali with these rituals. The Englishman was amazed how people were torturing themselves.

I also started thinking, "Instead of doing some good deeds or praising the Lord's Name, they are performing useless rituals." Regarding such superstitious rituals, Gurbani says:

"The religious rites, rituals and hypocrisies which are seen, are plundered by the Messenger of Death, the ultimate tax collector. In the state of Nirvaanaa, sing the Kirtan of the Creator's Praises; contemplating Him in meditation, even for an instant, one is saved." (SGGS p. 747)

Without the Lord's Name, salvation cannot be obtained. It is extremely important to meditate on *Naam*.

The benefit of Matha Tekan

Matha tekan is a form of respect when the forehead (*matha*) is bowed or even touched on the ground in front of any figure commanding respect e.g. an elderly person, a saint, a guru or a diety. However in *Sikhi* (the Sikh faith), *matha tekan* is reserved only for the True Guru (see Glossary for *matha tekna*).

I was about 15 years old, when on my way to school some women and older men would say to me, "Pundit Ji, I touch your feet." I felt embarrassed and wondered what they achieved by saying this to me. One day, I asked my father. He replied, "We have taken birth in a high caste and people feel that by showing respect to us they would benefit also. In the Hindu tradition, it is customary for people to bow before yogis, rishis and other people who give up normal life and live in the jungles. People of lower castes always invite the pundits for ceremonies such as marriages and other rituals and feel happy when they make donations to us." I asked, "What should I say when they show me respect?" He replied, "Say, 'Be Happy' to them." I asked if they would benefit in anyway from this blessing. Father said, "Only God knows if they would gain anything. All we want is due respect."

Father was very surprised to hear such questions and said, "Why do you ask such questions? Sometimes you want to know why we wear *tilak* marks on our foreheads, sometimes you ask about our sacred thread, sometimes you ask why we should keep a *bodi* (sacred lock of hair). This is our faith. Why do you question it? You don't know anything about religion. When you grow up, you'll realise how great the Hindu faith is." However, as to the greatness of any faith, Gurbani says

"Of all religions, the best religion is to chant the Name of the Lord and maintain highest conduct."
(SGGS p. 266)

In this dark age of *Kalyug* (see Glossary), the perfect Guru is Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. By paying our respects and bowing before Guru Ji, a person's sins of many births are washed off. What benefit can we get by bowing to a human being?

A scene of death

There was a man by the name of Hira Nath in our village. He never did any good deeds all his life. His preoccupation was to go hunting with his friends and drinking liquor. He hunted birds, deer, wild boars, and chickens, and killed and ate them. He drank so much liquor that his kidneys were damaged. When his end drew near, he was in great pain but the *swas* (breath of life) would not leave his body. He was shouting and screaming that the deer were piercing him with their horns and the chicken were pecking him. His condition became the talk of the village. Hearing about this, I also went to see him. When I heard his screaming, I thought to myself that that was the result of doing bad deeds. What would happen to his soul? Such a person would surely have to suffer through the cycle of 8.4 million life forms (see Glossary for *chawrasi laakh jooni*). Seeing this terrible scene, I became very sad and did not return home.

I went straight to Hardwar. I thought that if I stayed nearby, my parents would find me and soon get me married as I was already 22 years old. Two proposals for my marriage had already been received. One was of the same subcaste (marriage within the same sub caste, as indicated by family surname, is forbidden in the Hindu tradition) as we were and unsuitable for that reason, and the other was found unsuitable for other reasons. I thought that if I settled down as a family man, I would move away from meditation on the Lord's Name. With this in mind, I went directly to Hardwar.

PART 2 - SEARCH FOR THE TRUE GURU

In *Sikhi* there is only **One True Guru** who is capable of being **Perfect**, and none other. Therefore, the *Poora Guru* (Perfect Guru) is that One True Guru realised through Gurbani. Contemplation of a "perfect guru" even at this early stage by Bhai Sahib Ji, needs to be understood in the *Sikhi* sense.

His spiritual destination was always the One True Guru.

No salvation without the perfect (True) Guru

Hardwar is about 30 miles from my village. After taking a bath at *Har Ki Pauri* (Literally means "God's step" or "the step to God". There is also a *Har ki Pauri* at Harimandar (Golden Temple), Amritsar) in Hardwar, I proceeded to Rishikesh, which is regarded as the land of saints. I thought I would stay here and meditate on "Haaray Rama". I went into a dense jungle, found a quiet spot and spent the day reciting 'Haaray Rama, Haare Rama'. At night, I blindfolded myself and continued meditation and so on the following day. I did not care for hunger or thirst.

On the third day, while meditating, an inner voice repeatedly kept saying,

'Without the perfect (True) Guru there is no salvation. Without the perfect Guru there is no salvation.'

This inner voice became a continuous hum in my mind. I thought I should look for the perfect Guru but where should I go? If I went home, my father would be very angry. Then I remembered my uncle (father's brother) who owned a hotel in Delhi. I went to stay with him and also started helping in the hotel business.

At that time, I had no knowledge of the Sikh faith and neither did I know about the concept of the True Guru. It was my destiny to be united with the True Guru through initiation into *Sikhi*. When the time is right, a person comes into the *sharan* (protective presence) of the True Guru. The hotel I was working in was in front of Sis Ganj Sahib Gurdwara. But I had no knowledge of *Sikhi* nor did I know how to pay respects to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. I thought that just as the mosque is only for the Muslims, and the Mandar (Hindu temple) is only for the Hindus, the Gurdwara must also be only for the Sikhs. Now, having embraced *Sikhi*, I know that Gurdwaras are open to all religions and anyone can go in and pay respects to the Guru.

I started helping my uncle in the hotel and also learned how to cook. There were newspapers available for the guests to read at the hotel. One day, while having my meal and glancing through a newspaper, I saw an advertisement from a senior government official. It read, "I need a person who is able to handle party arrangements and is also willing to travel abroad." I took down the address and after work in the evening, I went to see the officer who had placed the advertisement. I told him that I was interested in travelling and that I was presently working in my uncle's hotel where I was in charge of catering. I also had cooking skills. I left my address with him.

He had a short travel deadline to meet and he came to see me the very next day. My uncle had gone out of town and I was running the hotel on my own. I offered the man some tea. He was very impressed to see me running the hotel. He took down my detailed particulars and asked for three photographs. I had the photos made the next day and he arranged for my passport to be made within a week.

Journey to Indonesia

The officer told me that we would be leaving for Indonesia on 20 July, 1957. I did not discuss this with anyone. I went to see him at the hotel where he was staying. He wasn't there, but had already given me a set of keys to his room. So I went inside and waited for his return.

There were two *Sukhmani Sahib* prayer books on the table (*Sukhmani Sahib* is a *Bani* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It was composed by the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji and its popularity is due to its simple language and soothing message for the human soul. After Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Jap Ji Sahib, *Sukhmani Sahib* may be regarded as the next comprehensive statement of Sikh ideology). One was in Hindi and the other in Gurmukhi. I started reading the Hindi version slowly. I felt as if the good deeds of my previous life were being rewarded and experienced great peace and satisfaction from reading the *Sukhmani Sahib*. As I completed the *Bani*, the officer walked in. He informed me that he had bought the prayer books for me. In case he became ill, he wanted me to be able to read *Sukhmani Sahib* to him.

He recited this *Bani* daily. He said that whoever recited this *Bani* received much peace and contentment. He continued, "I was formerly a teacher. Because of the blessing from continuously reciting the *Sukhmani Sahib*, I've now become an ambassador."

Since we had extra luggage, he sent me ahead on a ship. He was to follow by air. I had nothing else to do, so I started enjoying the bliss of reading *Sukhmani Sahib*. After about 21 days, I reached Indonesia. I was given a room in a guest house.

One day, as I was reading the Gurmukhi version of *Sukhmani Sahib*, my boss came in and stood behind me. He was very surprised to see me reciting *Gurbani* with such devotion. He said, "I respect anyone who recites *Sukhmani Sahib*. From now on, you are not my servant but my son. We will do *paatth* (reading of *Bani*) together. You are to instruct the servants to do the housework."

My boss had a daughter and a son. The daughter was married and the son, who was to be married, had died. My boss and his wife were very sad. When I started living with them, their minds became peaceful. We passed our days happily. I began to read *Sukhmani Sahib* daily. One and a half years of my life passed doing daily recitation of *Sukhmani Sahib* and "Haaray Rama". I began to feel much bliss. My boss said to me one day, "There is a job vacancy in the Indian Embassy. Since you have time on your hands, why don't you take the job."

The job required me to present documentary films of India's advancement in the various industries at meetings of officers and industrialists. This job took me to famous hotels and night-clubs. I began to draw an even higher salary. I thought to myself, "I have only recently started doing the *Paatth* of *Sukhmani Sahib* and I am already getting so much happiness and success. I started out as a servant and now I have already become a boss." We had two cars. One was our own and the other was official. We also had three servants, so there was no need for me to do any domestic work. I began to recite *Sukhmani Sahib* more often than once a day. Yet, the ways of the world began to affect me. The five evil vices of *kaam* (lust), *krodh* (anger), *lobh* (greed), *moh* (attachment) and *ahankar* (ego) do not allow a person to do meditation. Of these, *kaam* (lust) is the most overpowering. It bothered me most.

As I started going to the night-clubs, my mind started getting soiled. I started engaging in relationships with girls. I tried very hard to stop myself but was unable to. The bliss I got from reciting *Sukhmani Sahib* slowly decreased. When my boss would go to the parties, I would take a walk in the garden and recite 'Haaray Rama'. However, I did not get as much spiritual contentment as I did before. I thought to myself, "Why am I not getting any blissful contentment these days? Surely, I have committed some sin." My mind became so soiled that I did not even feel like reciting a single *Sukhmani Sahib Paatth*. Yet, I used to recite many *Paatths* in a day. I thought, "I am the same person, the *Sukhmani Sahib* is the same; then why is my mind wandering in all directions?" One day, while reciting the prayer, my mind paused on a verse:

"One, whose eyes do not gaze upon the beauty of others' wives, who serves the Holy and loves the Saintly' Congregation." (SGGS p. 274)

I realised that I had made a big mistake by indulging in immoral relationships with women. That was why I was not getting any satisfaction from reciting *Bani* anymore. I prayed repeatedly to the Lord but my wandering mind would not stay on *Gurbani*. Those who go to night-clubs, discos and pubs are bound to get their minds soiled. Those places are like rooms full of soot. Whoever goes into such a place even once, is bound to come out with his or her face and body blackened (Here, Bhai Sahib is pointing to the lasting spiritual and psychological damage done by immoral living and pornography. Those who indulge in "night life" in the name of modernity are unwittingly doing incalculable damage to their spiritual well-being and family life).

Our six-year duty tour in Indonesia was over and it was time to return to India. I was looking forward to seeing my parents again. When I got home, my parents were very happy to see me. In the morning when I recited *Sukhmani Sahib*, my brother asked me what I was reading. I told him that it was *Sukhmani Sahib*, a prayer compiled by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Hearing this, he got very angry and said, "You should be reciting the Gita or the Ramayan!" I was sad that my brother could not understand that this *Bani* gave peace and bliss. Only I knew how much happiness I had derived from reciting it. Instead of a mere servant, I had become the boss. Money was never a problem for me. After receiving so many boons, how could I give up reciting this *Bani*. A person of any faith can read *Sukhmani Sahib*. The power of this *Bani* is so great that the reader or the listener overcomes all pain and distress. My boss used to tell me true stories relating to *Sukhmani Sahib* after our daily recital of the prayer.

The reward of the Paatth of Sukhmani Sahib.

(i)

There was once a Muslim family deep in debt. The moneylender would daily harass them to pay up. One day, in great distress, the Muslim left the house with his family. After walking for some time, he saw a Gurdwara Sahib. He thought, "Maybe I can get something to eat from here." He was with his wife and baby. He went in and told the Granthi Singh (Sikh priest) in charge that his child was very hungry (A *granthi* may be described as a "Sikh priest" but it must be remembered that there is no ordained priesthood in *Sikhi*. This means that this is not a profession and any Gursikh man or woman can do paatth of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and perform any religious ceremony. This is an important Sikh principle as Guru Nanak Dev Ji spoke strongly against the priesthood which exploited people and spread superstition for selfish reasons. Unfortunately, this is what goes on in many Sikh Gurdwaras also and a sizeable "Sikh priesthood" class has come into being).

The compassionate Granthi Ji gave the child some milk and food to the parents. After the meal, the man related his sad story. He was very poor, in heavy debt and was in search of a job. Granthi Ji assured him, "You have come to the House of Guru Nanak. Here, those without hope get hope and those without respect get respect. How much respect do you have for Guru Nanak?"

"I have much respect for Guru Nanak," the man replied. "My parents also had faith in Guru Nanak." The Granthi Singh asked him if he would follow the Word of Guru Nanak. The man said, "I will follow whatever you say. I am grateful to you for providing me with a meal."

Next morning during *Amrit vela* i.e. before sunrise, the Granthi Ji told the man, "Sit here close to me, while your wife and child are resting. I am going to recite *Sukhmani Sahib* and you listen to it." Singh Sahib (i.e. Granthi Ji) started the prayer. After hearing it the Muslim man said, "I felt a lot of peace by listening to this prayer. Please teach me how to recite it." The Granthi Sahib told him, "Until you find a job, you can stay here and help out. At the same time you can learn to read *Sukhmani Sahib*." The family were given a room to stay in.

One day, it so happened, that a Sikh army officer came to pay respects to Guru *Maharaj* (King) at the Gurdwara Sahib. He told the Granthi Sahib, "I have a piece of untitled land adjoining the Gurdwara I am looking for someone to farm this land for me." The Granthi Singh thanked Waheguru saying that, "Whoever comes to your door never goes back empty." He then turned to the army officer and replied, "I have a person with me who will farm your land and take good care of it." Granthi Ji called the *Musalmaan* (Muslim) brother and told him the good news. The man was very happy that Guru Nanak had listened to his prayers. He started cultivating the land. While ploughing the land, he would recite the verses of *Sukhmani Sahib* one by one.

"Recite (Waheguru's Name) and through continual remembrance (of His Name receive His benediction and) be happy." (SGGS p.262)

As Granthi Ji taught him, so he remembered and recited *Sukhmani Sahib*. While doing the *paatth*, the day would pass easily and he would not even feel tired after work. After a lot of hard work, the crops flourished. It so happened that over time, the crop doubled, and then tripled. When the military officer returned, he was surprised to see the crops growing so well. He asked the Muslim brother, "What miracle has taken place here?" The latter replied, "Granthi Ji taught me to do

Sukhmani Sahib Paatth and I recite it the whole day while ploughing the fields. This is the miracle of *Sukhmani Sahib*." The officer was very happy to hear this and said, "I have wasted my entire life. Now, I too will start doing *Gurbani paatth*." And so, he also started reciting the *Sukhmani Sahib*.

(ii)

There were two friends from Madras working in an office. One of them moved to Bombay on promotion. He invited his friend in Madras to Bombay for holidays. In his letter of invitation, he wrote his address and telephone number. Reading the letter, the friend in Madras and his family were very happy and replied by post saying that they would be arriving in Bombay on such and such a date etc. and asked to be picked up from the railway station.

On the day of their arrival, the friend in Bombay went to the station to pick them up but the train was going to be delayed for two hours or more. He decided to go home thinking that, after all, his friend had his address and telephone number and would surely 'phone him on arrival.

Two hours later the train arrived. The station was very crowded. The family got off the train and looked around the station for their friend but he was nowhere to be seen. The wife said, "Never mind. Let us 'phone him." The man searched his pockets to get the telephone number and realised that he had been pick-pocketed. His wallet was missing and so was the address slip inside it. The entire family was in distress and wondered where to go. They did not even have money left to stay overnight in a hotel.

After thinking for sometime, they decided to go to a church to pass the night. They took a taxi to the nearest church and rang the doorbell. The pastor came to the door and inquired why they had rung the bell. The man replied, "I am a Christian. I have come from Madras and upon arrival in Bombay, I was pick-pocketed. My money and my friend's address have been stolen. I was hoping to spend the night in the church." The pastor wondered about them thinking to himself, "I don't know who these people are. What if they are thieves?" He replied, "There is no place here for you to stay. Please go to some hotel," and he shut the door.

The man was really worried now and wondered what to do next. He told their taxi driver to take them to some Hindu temple. They rang the doorbell at a temple. The temple priest got up and came to the door. It was quite late already and the priest asked angrily, "Why did you wake me up?" The man explained his situation and that the family needed a place to spend the night. The priest replied, "There is no place for you to stay here." Hearing this, the man felt even more desperate.

The taxi driver was a Sikh. He suggested, "Let me take you to my Gurdwara. Maybe there you'll get a place to stay the night." It was already very late when they reached the Gurdwara. They rang the door-bell. The Granthi Ji came to the door and the man related his story, and asked for a place to pass the night. Granthi Ji replied warmly, "You are welcome. You will get a place to stay and food to eat." The man's wife had some money with her. She paid the taxi driver and thanked him for bringing them to a good place. Granthi Ji told his wife to prepare a meal for them. After dinner, she also gave them some warm milk to drink. The family felt relieved and safe.

At *Amrit vela* (early morning), Granthi Ji recited *Sukhmani Sahib*. The man from Madras felt comforted by listening to *Gurbani*. He asked the Granthi Ji what he was reading. Granthi Ji replied, "This is the prayer which gives peace to the mind, *Sukhmani Sahib*." The man asked, "Do you have an English version. I feel like reading it too but I can only read English." Granthi Ji replied, "I have

an English version which I can give you, but it is forbidden in our religion for someone to handle the prayer book while drinking liquor or smoking cigarettes." The man gave his assurance that he did not smoke or drink.

The secretary of the Gurdwara came. The Granthi related the family's difficulty to him. The secretary was a kind-hearted man. He reassured them, saying "We will buy you return tickets from the Gurdwara fund and when you return to Madras, you may repay the money if you wish." When the family returned to Madras, the man sent back the money to the Gurdwara. He also wrote that he was reading *Sukhmani Sahib* everyday. After some time, he received a job promotion and sent some money to the Gurdwara's *Langar* (holy community kitchen open to all without distinction).

(iii)

There lived a rich man in Ludhiana. He had a servant girl. When the lady of the house recited *Sukhmani Sahib*, the servant girl also listened to it. She would sit near the lady and listen to *Gurbani* while ironing clothes. Although the girl was uneducated, her mind became peaceful when she listened to the prayers. The lady thought, "This girl is reaching maturity. Soon it will be time for her to get married. She will be needing some money for her marriage." So, she increased the girl's salary putting the extra amount in a bank. When it was time for the wedding, the lady went to meet the girl's father and handed over the girl's savings to him. She said, "I liked your daughter and increased her salary so that she could use it for her wedding." The girl's father was very happy and thanked the lady. The lady replied, "Your daughter listened to the *Sukhmani Sahib Paatth* daily. This is the blessing of the prayer."

In search of the True Guru

After remembering all these incidents, I thought that while I could part with my own brother, I could not do without reciting *Sukhmani Sahib*. I was unhappy and felt like going to some quiet place to do *simran* (short for *Naam simran*: meditative recitation of God's Name). I went to my mother and said, "You have two sons and two daughters. If anything happens to one of them, you have to accept God's will."

Hearing this, my mother took me in her arms and we both wept. She knew that I wanted to leave. I said, "The *Naam* you taught me to recite during my childhood is now in my heart and soul. Now I only feel like continuing wholeheartedly with the recitation of *Naam*." My mother said, "I know that it is written in your fate to recite *Naam*. When you meditate, we will benefit also."

I next went to my father and also told him about my desire to meditate. When he heard this, he took out my birth chart and started reading it (this is the *janam kundli* or *janum path* which foretells one's course in life. It is prepared by pundits on the basis of one's date and time and other details relating to one's birth. While some Sikhs indulge in such practices they have no validity in a practical life ideology like *Sikhi* which believes in *udham* (effort), *ghaal* (sustained effort to live an upright life of *Naam simran* and *sewa*) and *nadar* (Waheguru's unpredictable benevolence which unites the wandering soul with the Ultimate Reality)).

It was written that I was going to start meditating from a very young age. When I grew up, I would visit many countries. My father said, "If this is written in your fate, I shall not try to stop you" I hugged my father and told him "Other than repeating the Lord's Name, I have lost interest in everything else."

When going to bed that night, I thought to myself, "I should obtain *gurmantar* (guru's mystical blessing) from a great soul and sit in some quiet place to do *simran*." The next morning, I took a bus to Delhi. When I reached Delhi, I thought, "I might meet somebody here who would recognise me, my *moh* (attachment) may be rekindled. I might start missing my family, give up my mission and go home. I transferred to a train that was going to Bombay. As I sat in the train, I kept thinking of my home. I wondered where I was going, leaving my parents, brother and sisters. I had no destination and no abode. Soon it was night and, tired as I was, I fell asleep.

In my dream, someone said to me, "Your attachments are due to past deeds and one day, you have to part. The Lord's Name is written in your destiny. The place where you are going will be good for you."

When I arrived in Bombay, I stayed in a hotel for one night. I decided to look for cheaper accommodation. From the newspaper advertisements, I found a room in Panjabi Colony. I thought to myself, "My soul has become very soiled. Without meditation it is not going to get cleansed." I recited *Sukhmani Sahib* daily and spent a lot of time doing *simran*. My mind was full of *bairag* (spiritual loneliness - see also Glossary) and while doing *simran* for many hours, I used to wonder when I would meet the perfect guru. I began my search.

First I went to a church. Everyone was sitting on chairs. I sat down too. One man got up and read a poem about Jesus. "Beloved Jesus, you are the King of the whole world, the whole world knows you."

I did not find peace at this place. In the Hindu faith, people take off their shoes and sit on the floor when they pray. I didn't like it at the church because everybody was sitting on chairs with their shoes on. I decided to go back home. The next day, I went to the Mandar (Hindu temple). There was a ladies' *satsang* (congregation) in progress. A few men were present, also. The ladies were singing a folk song in praise of Bhagwan Krishan.

"Go away the black clouds. Don't rain in my city. My lord has gone to foreign lands..."

I was hoping to meet a saint there but I was disappointed. When the programme ended the priest gave each of us two *tulsi* (basil) leaves as *prasaad* (sacrament). In the Hindu faith, *tulsi* is considered very sacred. My aim to find a true guru was not fulfilled there either. I was very sad. I had not found a true guru and thought of going to Hardwar. Meanwhile, I continued to meditate. I used to go to a park to do *simran*. Two to three months passed in this manner. While meditating *Kalyug* (worldly distractions attributed to the Age of *Kalyug* - see *yug* in the Glossary) started disturbing me. My mind started to wander. I prayed to the Lord, "I have given up everything but I am still getting bad dreams. When will I be freed from sins?" The Lord heard my prayer. There was a Gurdwara on the way to the park.

"The loving desire to meet my Beloved has arisen within my mind. I touch His Feet, and offer my prayer to Him. If only I had the great good fortune to meet the Saint." (SGGS p. 204)

It had not occurred to me that people of all faiths could go to the Gurdwara. I saw people going into the Gurdwara for *matha tekan* (paying respects - see Glossary) to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Some were coming out after paying their respects. Those who had short hair covered their heads with handkerchiefs. I asked them, "Can I go inside too?" They replied, "If you have a handkerchief with you, you can cover your head and go inside." I covered my head with a handkerchief and went inside to pay my respects. When performing *matha tekan* before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, I felt some divine force on my head and could not lift it up for some time. After a while, I got up and sat with the *Sangat* (holy Congregation). I felt as though I had finally come home.

It was evening. The Granthi Singh started reciting the *Bani of Rehraas Sahib*. It was followed by *kirtan* (devotional singing of *Gurbani* to the accompaniment of musical instruments) done by a *raagi jatha* (group of professional Gurbani singers). Listening to the words, my mind became very calm. A *sewadar* (anyone who is serving) who saw me sitting very still, thought that I was sleeping and requested me to come outside to have some tea. He then advised me that whenever I come to the Gurdwara, I should sit attentively. When I went back into the Gurdwara, a *Gurbani katha* (sermon explaining the meaning of Gurbani) was in progress. The *Giani Ji* (title of respect for a learned person) said that in the age of *Kalyug* (see Glossary), the Perfect Guru was Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Hearing this, I was filled with joy that my search for *the* Perfect Guru was over; that I had at last found the Guru I had been looking for and my innermost desire had been fulfilled. I returned home.

That night I dreamt that the *jamdoots* (angels of death) were taking my soul away to some destination (*Jamdoots* are the *doots* (envoys or messengers) of Jamraj or Dharamraj, the mythical judge who holds his court at the entry to the next world, the hereafter. Dharamraj passes judgement on the souls leaving this worldly existence. So *jamdoots* represent death and are the dark angels of death i.e. Dharamraj. They do the bidding of Dharamraj and also punish souls. A *farishta* on the other hand, in common language is a white angel of god. The word is also used for a person who does good).

On the way, I saw other souls being taken away too. They were being tortured by the *jamdoots*. We were in a long line with many souls in front of me and many following behind. However, my soul was not being tortured because I had recited God's Name.

Where there is no mother, father, children, friends or brothers, O my mind, there, only the *Naam*, the Name of the Lord, shall be with you as your help and support. Where the great and terrible Messenger of Death shall try to crush you, there, only the *Naam* shall go along with you. (SGGS p. 264)

As we walked along, we passed by a very dark area. In this darkness, we saw some very frightful scenes. They were so terrifying that a person could easily faint from fright.

"Where the path is difficult and the street is narrow, there the Lord shall liberate you." (SGGS p. 996)

As we went further we came to an extremely hot place. It felt as if there was fire burning under our feet. Then there was a hill, which we were ordered to climb. Those, whose souls were soiled, found it very difficult to climb this hill. The *jamdoots* beat them and forced them to climb the hill. Those with pure souls climbed the hill very easily. According to the Hindu faith, it takes one year for the soul to reach the court of the judge Dharamraj. My soul was travelling at a very fast speed. Along the way, I saw all these scenes but they did not affect my soul directly.

On the other side of the hill, was the court of Dharamraj where the good and bad deeds done in one's life are judged, and reward or punishment meted out accordingly. Like the modern computer which enables immediate access to information, Dharamraj too is able to look up accounts of people's deeds instantly. There was a lady standing in the line next to mine. Dharamraj said to her, "You have served saintly people. There are many pots of milk and a variety of food for you. Although, you have done good deeds, you did not meditate on the Lord's Name. You will be reborn a human being. This time be sure to meditate on the Lord's Name and obtain salvation." Another person's turn came before mine.

Dharamraj said, "Although you were given a chance as a human being, you didn't do any good deeds. You wasted your life doing evil deeds." He told the *jamdoots*, "Send this soul to hell and throw it back into the cycle of *chawrasi lakh joon* (8.4 million life forms)."

Next it was my turn (It needs to be remembered that Bhai Sahib Ji is reciting own experience at a certain time in his life based on his belief at the time). Dharamraj said to me, "You have recited *Bani* and meditated on the Lord's Name, but your mind is soiled from the sins in this life. You have to be sentenced for this. The *jamdoots* took me to a place where human souls were punished for their bad deeds. The place resembled an immigration area at the airport where people with different passports line up in different lanes. Here, there was a separate line for each bad deed. There was a signboard displayed on every lane. For a lustful person, there was a door to a fire chamber. Next was a doorway for those who had listened to other people's gossip. They were punished by having red hot liquid iron poured into their ears. Liars had their tongues cut off. Thieves had their hands cut off. I could see these terrifying scenes from where I was standing. There was still a long line in front of me.

Then the *jamdoots* brought me in front of the fire doorway and commanded me to go inside. I was terrified. They said that if I did not go in, they would beat my head with a heavy club. They pushed

me in. It was a most dreadful place like a big pond. Many people were suffering there and screaming in agony. Nothing but cries of anguish could be heard. Nobody could think of food or water. The water in the pond was boiling like a volcano and small creatures were stinging people. The whole night passed in this dream. When it was time for me to get up to do my *Paatth* of *Sukhmani Sahib*, my soul returned from hell into my body as I chanted, "*Aad Guray nameh, jugad Guray nameh....*" the first line of *Sukhmani Sahib Bani*, "I bow to the Greatest (Waheguru) Who is the source of all; I bow to the Guru Who is through the ages.

When I opened my eyes, I was sweating and I had marks of insect stings all over my body. At this point I thanked Guru Arjan Dev Ji a million times for the *Bani* of *Sukhmani Sahib* and started crying profusely. I kept repeating, "*Dhan* (Praise be to) Guru Arjan Dev Ji! *Dhan* Guru Arjan Dev Ji!" and thanked God for blessing me and saving me from hell.

It is a well-known truth that recommendation of an influential person works in our worldly affairs. If a person is jailed and a high- ranking officer calls in asking for the person's release, the person is freed. The same is very true in our spiritual life. Guru Arjan Dev Ji *Maharaj* (Great King) helped me out of hell. I thought to myself, "O' lustful man! For a moment of sexual pleasure, see how much you had to suffer."

"O sexual desire, you lead the mortals to hell; you make them wander in reincarnation through countless species. You cheat the consciousness, and pervade the three worlds. You destroy meditation, penance and virtue. But you give only shallow pleasure, while you make the mortals weak and unsteady; you pervade the high and the low. Your fear is dispelled in the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy, O Nanak, through the Protection and Support of the Lord" (SGGSp. 1358)

Sinners sin and suffer in agony

"The sinners (commit sinful acts), and generate bad *karma* (sow the seeds of punishment), and then they weep and wail. O Nanak, just as the churning stick churns the butter, so does the Righteous Judge of Dharma churn them." (SGGS p. 1425)

This *shabad* (hymn) appears in the last few *saloks* (stanzas) of page 1425 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Maharaj Ji seems to be reminding us, "O human being, if you have not realised this truth in the last 1424 pages of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, then you are being reminded again."

In this world sinners happily commit sins but when they die, they cry out in anguish, "Hai, hai" as they pass through terrifying paths and see terrifying *jamdoots* (dark angels of death) on their way to the other world. Guru Ji says, that just as a turning churn beats curd (to separate butter), so Dharamraj, through his *jamdoots*, tortures and punishes the sinners in hell. It is frightful enough to see these tortures, let alone go through them.

O' human being! You preoccupy yourself satisfying your worldly needs. Hourly, you demand a cup of tea. You eat several times a day. You spend many hours watching television. Every morning, you must read the newspapers. If some neighbours come visiting, you end up gossiping. This is how your day passes. Every person has come into this world for a short time. The inevitable return to the God's court is forgotten. There is no enthusiasm to do good deeds.

"Making all sorts of efforts, they wander around; but they do not make even one effort. O Nanak, how rare are those who understand the effort which saves the world." (SGGS p. 965)

You are not performing the task for which you came and waste your whole day in materialistic pursuits.

"O human being, meditate on the Lord, as long as there is breath in your body." (SGGS p. 724)

You have come into this world for the sole purpose of meditating on the Lord's Name.

"O mortal, you came here to earn a profit. What useless activities are you attached to? Your life-night is coming to its end." (SGGS p. 43)

Satguru Ji (the True Guru) says that you have come to this world to reap the fruit of the True Name but you are wasting your precious life in worldly pursuits.

"Fareed, the hours of the day are lost wandering around, and the hours of the night are lost in sleep. God will call for your account, and ask you why you came into this world." (SGGS p. 1379)

Bhagat Farid says that, "O human being, you waste half of the day/night cycle (i.e. half of twenty-four hours) doing your household chores and the other half sleeping. You have not meditated on God's Name. When you die, Dharamraj will ask for an account of your deeds. What reply will you give then?"

Meditate on the Name of God and make your life successful. Save yourself! Save yourself from the torture of *jamdoots* which is very severe indeed. Gurbani bears witness to the suffering of the soul

following a wasted life. The (life and death) ocean of fear can only be crossed in the company of the *Saadh Sangat* (Holy Congregation).

I have had personal experience of how a lustful person is tortured in that horrible nightmare. A person is first taken through a gate of fire and thrown into the pit of hell where the water is boiling all the time.

When the soul reaches there, it repents for its evil deeds. There is no food or water served. On all four sides, one can hear the wailing of "hai! hai!" If someone asks for water, he is first asked by the *jamdoots* for which good deed done during his lifetime he should be given water. If he has none to his credit, then no water is given. Therefore, O human being, for the remainder of your life, use it for *simran* and charity, because when you die, only *Naam simran* (see Glossary) will be of any help to you. Reap the benefit of the human form. If you end up in the cycle of 8.4 million life forms, you do not know when you will get a human birth again. Now, that you have been given a human body, you should make good use of it. If you have not started doing *simran*, it is still not too late for you to make a start. Bhagat Kabir Ji says in the following shabad:

"Meditate in remembrance on the Lord, or else you will regret it in the end, O mind. O sinful soul, you act in greed, but today or tomorrow, you will have to get up and leave. || 1 || Pause || Clinging to greed, you have wasted your life, deluded in the doubt of *Maya* (see Glossary). Do not take pride in your wealth and youth; you shall crumble apart like dry paper. || 1 || When the Messenger of Death comes and grabs you by the hair, and knocks you down, on that day, you shall be powerless. You do not remember the Lord, or vibrate upon Him in meditation, and you do not practise compassion; you shall be beaten on your face. || 2 || When the Righteous Judge of *Dharam* (Righteous Conduct) calls for your account, what face will you show Him then? Says Kabir, listen, O Saints: in the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy, you shall be saved. || 3 || (SGGSp. 1106)

In a shabad in Sri Dasam Granth Sahib, (Roopkaur Prathai Patshahi 10), Guru Gobind Singh Ji repeated his father's advice to him forbidding extra-marital relationships with women. A man should daily get closer to his own life partner and never, even in a dream, think about sleeping with another woman.

Many examples from Indian lore are given illustrating clearly that nothing but grief results from extra-marital affairs.

"The mind of the faithless cynic is like a crazy elephant. It wanders around the forest, distracted by attachment to *Maya* (see Glossary)." (SGGS p. 415)

The teaching in this *shabad* is that the wandering mind should be controlled as a horse is kept in check by the reins, and senses should be controlled as the saddle on a horse is secured in place.

From that day onwards, I started going to the Gurdwara daily. There were two Gurdwaras near the vicinity of my house. One day, I went to the other Gurdwara. After the *Paatth* of *Rehraas Sahib*, *kirtan* was sung. Someone had done the *sewa* (arrangement) of *langar* (Gurdwara food) that day. The Secretary requested everyone to have *langar* before leaving. I sat down in the *pangat* (non-discriminatory line in the *langar* area for eating food). The person serving *langar* was scrutinizing everybody to see if anyone had come back for a second round of *langar*. I said to someone, "That person is doing *sewa*, but he is looking at us sternly." Just then, a poor old lady came and sat in the

pangat. She asked for a metal plate for food. The person serving the food scolded her, " You bad woman! You have come to eat for the second time! I shall not give you food twice!"

Seeing the action of that man, I realized that Gurbani had no effect on him at all.

"Kabir, what can the True Guru do, when His Sikhs are at fault? The blind do not take in any of His Teachings; it is as useless as blowing into bamboo." (SGGS p. 1372)

Humility and courtesy are the pillars of *Sikhi* but this man lacked both these virtues. His harsh words affected me but Guru's *Bani* which had pierced deeply into my heart, reminded me (as above) **that I was to become the Sikh of the Guru and not the Sikh of another Sikh**, hence, Bhai Sahib Ji is reminding us here that we are to become the Sikhs of the One and Only True Guru through His Bani (Guru Bani) and never the Sikhs of another Gurbhai Sikh, no matter how accomplished. This point needs stressing in view of the global spread of Sikh gurudoms. **This man will reap what he is sowing.**



Scenes of Hell: These pictures are displayed at a Singapore museum (Haw Par Villa). The scenes of Hell resemble those which Bhai Rama Singh saw in his dreamlike vision.



Bhai Rama Singh in Paris with Dalia, before embracing Sikhism and before Guru Sahib Ji's partakh Darshan (divine sight).



And after embracing Gursikhi when Dally was leaving for Israel.



In England after the second Amrit Sanchaar (see Glossary), the Panj Piaray (Five beloved ones in orange robes – from right to left) Giani Amolak Singh, Bhai Mohinder Singh, Bhai Rama Singh, Bhai Avtar Singh and Bhai Amrik Singh



In Vancouver (Canada) Bhai Rama Singh (left) can be seen with Sant Baba Sewa Singh Ji, Bhai Joginder Singh and his son, and Giani Ji.



Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Yogi preaching Sikhi in America, and an American Singh.



In the West, the white people are also embracing Sikhi. A model of Sikhi parchaar (preaching), Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji of Malaysia with Singhs and Singhanis from England and America.



Fountain of Amrit, promoting kaar-seva (variety of services including construction projects) at Sri Anandpur Sahib, Sant Baba Labh Singh Ji at Derby. With him from left to right) S. Rajinder Singh Purewal (Proprietor of Punjab Times) and Bibi Jasvir Kaur Purewal, Bhai Rama Singh, Bhai Pakhar Singh, Baba Labh Singh Ji, Bhai Jagtar Singh, Bhai Waheguru Singh and Bhai Malkit Singh.



When Sant Baba Sheesha Singh Ji, who is promoting Kaar-sewa at Gurdwara Langar Sahib (Baba Nidhan Singh Ji) at Sri Naded (Nanded) Sahib, came to England for making a sewa collection. (Left to right) Bhai Amarjit Singh, Baba Sheesha Singh Ji, Bhai Harbans Singh and Bhai Harcharan Singh with the sangat at London.



Above doing kirtan: Bhai Sukhdev Singh, Bhai Harbhajan Singh and Bhai Dupinder Singh



Bhai Prithipal Singh and Amritpal Singh playing Gatka in Italy.



A sangat scene in which Bhai Sahibs Sadhu Singh Atwal, Pakhar Singh and Randhir Singh Atwal can be seen.



Bhai Rama Singh Ji discussing Gurmat with children at a children's camp at Makindu Gurdwara in East Africa. On the left is Bibi Manjit Kaur, on the right, Bhai Satnam Singh (Southall) and children.



The Singhs of New York greeting the jatha (group) from England at Kennedy Airport to attend the Gurmat Camp at New York. From right to left; Bhai Raghbir Singh, Bhai Sohan Singh, Bhai Jarnail Singh, Bhai Pakhar Singh, Bhai Rajinder Singh Purewal.



Sikh children living in different countries are keen to learn kirtan. In the above photo, Nottingham's Bhai Malkit Singh's daughter Bibi Mansunder Kaur (Sundri) is playing tabla (drums) with Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji.



Small children doing kirtan



International Akhand Kirtan Smaagam at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick, Birmingham.

Journey to England

Ashok Kumar and I were classmates. He had migrated to Africa with his parents and later gone to England to pursue further studies. We wrote letters to each other. One day, I received his letter, inviting me to visit him in England. He sent me the necessary immigration papers also. I started making preparations.

I already had a passport, so I bought a ticket to travel by ship to England. The ship left Bombay on 1 January 1964, and arrived at Tilbury, England on 18 January 1964. The journey took 17 days and the sight of the sea everywhere was a great experience. My friend came to pick me up. When we reached his house, I asked him if there was any Gurdwara nearby. He said that he had heard of a Gurdwara in Shepherds Bush but he had not been there to see it. It was not too far. I was delighted. I got my first *nitnem gutka* (daily prayer book) from this Gurdwara.

Ashok was working in the Indian Embassy in England. He told me of a job opening in his work place and asked me to apply for the job. The next day, I went to India House. I had a letter of recommendation from the President of India. When I was working in Indonesia, the President of India had come for a tour. The officer, for whom I was working, assigned me the job of looking after the well-being of the President during his stay in Indonesia. He stayed for a week, during which I served him well. Before leaving, he wrote me a character reference in which he said that I was a good and honest worker and that he was happy with my service. I took this reference along for my interview.

I told the interviewing officer that I had a character reference letter from the President of India. While I could not speak fluent English, I was able to read and write. When he saw my referral letter, he was very pleased and said politely, "There is no real need to speak English here as all the officers are Indians." I was given the job and assigned light duties. I thought to myself, "Because of a reference from a worldly 'king' (i.e. the President), nobody questioned me. If a person sings the glories of the Lord, then he will surely receive respect and be welcomed in God's court." My faith in the Lord increased even more.

After working for two or three days, I said to myself, "You are forgetting the meditation on *Naam*. Why have you got yourself entangled in worldly affairs?" Hearing my heart's prayer, Waheguru Ji gave me an opportunity to meditate on his Name. Soon the High Commissioner of India was transferred to India. His house was now vacant. My colleague and I were given the duty of looking after it. I saw this as an opportunity to spend more time doing *paatth* and *simran*. One day, as I started reciting the *Japji Sahib*, my thoughts were focused on the opening Basic Precept of Gurbani, the *Mool Mantar*; *Ik Oangkar, Sat naam, Karta Purakh, Nirbhau, Nirvair, Akaal Moorat, Ajooni, Saibhang, Gurprasaad*. (*Mool Mantar*, SGGS p. 1)

In the wording of the *Mool Mantar* above, the God as revealed to Guru Nanak Dev Ji is described as: The positively infinite One (*Ik* indicated by the numerical 1 is symbolic of the positive nature of the God Being. God is not zero or *shun* as in some other Indian traditions). Supreme Source of all creation (*Oangkar* shown by the first letter of the Gurmukhi alphabet *ooda*, which is left open ended at the top to indicate the infinite and creative nature of the God Being), the Truth (*Sat*), the Universal Spirit or Being (*Naam*), the Creator Being (*Karta Purakh*), the Fearless Sovereign who is without enmity (*Nirbhau Nirvair*), the Picture of Eternal Beauty (*Akaal Moorat*), the Unborn and Self-existent (*Ajooni Saibhang*), the Enlightener (*Gur*), the Bountiful (*Prasaad*). (*Gur Prasaad* is also interpreted as "(to be realised) through the Grace of the Guru (This is a form of interpretation

which is sometimes mis-construed to promote intermediary gurus. In *Sikhi* the Guru is the True Guru's Bani and through Bani the Ultimate Truth i.e. the God Being described by Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the *Mool Mantar*)." Translation of the original wording can never be certain, therefore, the original divine wording must be read by Sikhs and non-Sikhs to *feel* the deeper meaning known only to the True Guru Himself.

I felt like repeating this verse over and over again. I felt that this must be some kind of *mantar* (mystical formula) and decided to repeat it continuously. I recited the *Mool Mantar* for one hour and my mind became calm. I told my colleague, "I will cover your duties and you are free to go wherever you want. I will also cook your meals but you must buy the food. All I ask for is to be left alone." He was very happy to hear this, as he was not required to do any work. The next day, I experienced even more calmness in my mind. I started doing more meditation. I thanked God for providing me with that job and also ample time for doing *simran*. This went on for six or seven months. I started enjoying it more and more. I would recite *Mool Mantar* twelve to thirteen hours daily.

After about ten months, I was blessed with *ridhian sidhian'* (spiritual powers - n" is soft in pronunciation. *Ridhian sidhian* are associated with magical cult powers and not approved in *Sikhi*). I achieved calmness of mind and felt like reciting prayers all the time. By *ridhian sidhian* I mean that I was able to foretell the near future. I could foresee if it would rain or shine the following day. There are many other kinds of things too which can be foreseen. To be blessed with such extra sense by God, may be compared to the situation, when a boss is happy with his subordinate's work, he promotes the latter and provides him a secretary to lighten the work-load. The secretary takes care of all of the odd jobs. In the same way, a person who pleases the Lord by meditating on His Name, is blessed with these spiritual powers for help in life. Unfortunately, many people, who are blessed with spiritual powers, get preoccupied with them. They remain stuck at this point and fail to make any further progress. They never get to enjoy *Naam ras* (the sweet ambrosial taste of God's Name).

"(Such powers of) *Ridh sidh* symbolise worldly attachment, and obstruct the habitation of *Naam* in the devotees mind." (SGGS p. 593)

I was very happy that having done so little *simran*, God was taking care of all my affairs. After one year, the High Commissioner returned home. We were relieved of duty from there and returned to the main office at India House.

No matter what faith a person belongs to, he is sure to obtain spiritual powers if he meditates on the *Mool Mantar* ten to twelve hours daily. At that time I was clean shaven. When I returned to India House, I was given heavier workload and my job required me to talk to people. There was no peace in the surrounding environment and I could not recite and complete my *paatth*. I spent time reading newspapers and the time I spent doing *paatth* of *Mool Mantar* decreased considerably. My mind started wandering again and I lost the gift of the spiritual powers.

I developed an interest in learning English. After office hours in the evening, I started attending English classes. There I made more friends. One day, while my friends and I were sitting and chatting in the canteen, we decided to take a trip out of town during the holidays. A Punjabi friend of mine had a car. Our group was made up of a brother and sister who were Christians, another girl from Israel, my Panjabi friend and me. All of us were classmates. We finalised our plan to visit other parts of Europe.

Pertakh Darshan (Experience of a Holy Sight in reality)

When we were about to leave for our holiday, one of the girls suddenly fell ill. We could not cancel our trip as we had already taken leave from work. The remaining four of us set off as planned. From Dover we went to Paris, Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany. I was reciting *Japji Sahib* and *Chaupai Sahib* all along the journey. The Israeli girl, Dalia, asked my Punjabi friend, "What is Ram reading in the morning and evening?" He replied, "He is reading the hymns of the Guru. By reading these hymns, the mind becomes pure. The Guru takes care of his Sikh and saves him from doing bad deeds." Dalia asked him, "Then why aren't you reading the hymns too?" to which he replied, "I used to read them. I didn't cut my hair either. Now, because of work, I have cut my hair and also stopped reciting my prayers."

We reached Germany quite late at night. All of us were exhausted. The hotel was almost fully booked. We managed to get 2 rooms with double beds. After booking the rooms, we realised that Dalia had to sleep somewhere too; she would have to sleep with one of us. Dalia knew I was a religious person and a Sikh of the Guru. Dalia said, "I really don't mind. I'll sleep with Ram as I have full trust in him." At that moment, I remembered Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and in the depth of my heart prayed, "O True King, I have not become your true Sikh yet, I haven't kept my hair. This girl believes me to be your Sikh. Please save the honour of your *Sikhi*." Even then, my mind was doubtful as I wondered what thoughts could be running in Dalia's mind. Hopefully, her mind would not waver. As I went to bed, I remembered the scene in hell. I was so exhausted that I fell into a deep sleep and even forget that there was a girl in the room with me.

At *Amrit vela* (about one or two in the morning), the room was suddenly flooded by a very bright light. My body became weightless. A sweet, melodious tune started playing in my ears, and I was in a state of spontaneous *Naam simran*. I could hardly bear the ecstasy of this phenomenon. At that time Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj gave me his holy *pertakh darshan* (*Pertakh* experience is that, the reality of which is not in any doubt i.e. "real, clear and present" (e.g. *pertakh Guru nistaaray*) i.e. not imaginary. Therefore *pertakh darshan* is not a vision but a real experience of seeing and hearing a holy person or a diety). I felt that I had seen Guru Maharaj Ji in this form sometime before, when He was in a living body, during His lifetime. Guru Maharaj Ji's first words to me were, "Take *Amrit* and be initiated as a Singh. Your mission will be to promote *Amrit* baptism in many countries."

Guru Maharaj Ji's second command was, "I have given my Khalsa five *kakars* (articles of faith) — *kachhera* (Khalsa martial shorts), *kara* (iron bangle), *kirpan* (sword), *kanga* (small wooden comb), and *keski* (a short turban to cover and protect unshorn hair - *kes*). The Sikh Panth (those who belong to the Sikh faith) and the *Khalsa* (those who have taken Amrit) do not follow my directive. Some have modified the fifth *kakar* from *kes-ki* (short turban for covering hair) to *kes* (hair). You are ordered not to give Amrit in the baptism ceremony unless *keski* is included as one of the 5 *kakars*

The third message of Guru Ji was, "The coming of Khalsa Raj is inevitable. But, only when the Khalsa follows my guidance. *Rehat*, the code of conduct for the Sikhs, is more important to me than a Sikh.

During the Khalsa Raj, spiritual guidance will be mine and the *Panj Piaray*, the Five Beloved Ones, will give the lead. Punjab will become like heaven, a part of *Sachkhand*, the Plane of Truth

i.e. God's country. The Khalsa institution of *Panj Piaray* will head every local (village level) community.

On hearing these divine words, I could not contain myself and lost consciousness. When I opened my eyes, Maharaj Ji had gone. I did not have enough strength left in me to try even to speak with Guru Ji. In all humility, I felt extremely blessed to have been entrusted with the supreme *sewa* of *Amrit sanchaar* - initiating Sikhs to the supreme order of the Khalsa through the ceremony of *Amrit sanchaar* (see *Amrit* in the Glossary).

"Chant the Naam yourself, and inspire others to chant it as well Hearing, speaking and living it, emancipation is obtained. To essential reality is the True Name of the Lord. With intuitive ease, O Nanak, sing His Glorious Praises." (SGGS p. 289)

"When the seed of the karma of past actions sprouted, I met the Lord; He is both the Enjoyed and the Renunciate. My darkness was dispelled when I met the Lord. O Nanak, after being asleep countless incarnations, I have awakened." (SGGS p. 204)

When I woke up in the morning, my eyes were filled with tears. Dalia asked me, "Ram, what has happened to you?" I replied, "You will not understand what miracle I have experienced." I slowly explained to her that Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Master of the universe, came here to grant me salvation. She was very surprised that my Guru was so merciful that he had come to meet me. She told me that she dreamt that she was asleep in a beautiful land with sweet smelling flowers. I was so touched to know that Guru Ji had also blessed this girl. She must be a very fortunate soul. Because of her, I got the chance to see the Lord.

From that day onwards, I stopped shaving my beard and cutting my hair. I decided to receive Guru's Gift of *Amrit* (through *Amrit* initiation - see Glossary) and be initiated into the Order of the Khalsa as soon as I returned to England. The longing of my soul for union with the Lord Guru (through the ceremony of *Amrit Sanchar* - see Glossary) was like that of Bhai Gurdas when he was in Kanshi and remained separated from Guru Ji for a prolonged period.

[Translation note: At this time Bhai Gurdas wrote a *Kabit* (stanza) which describes in the most poetic language the longing of the soul, depicted as a woman, who meets her True Love in His full Glory and wakes up to find that her condition is like a fish which has been thrown out of the water. It is not within the linguistic skill of this servant of the Guru to be able to capture the intensity and beauty of Bhai Sahib's language. For reference, the *Kabit* starts, "*Supan charitar chitar, banak banay bachitar, Pavan Pavitar Mittar, aaj moray aa-ay hain...*" (Bhai Gurdas *Kabit* 205.) Bearing in mind Bhai Rama Singh Ji's constant reminder about the great importance of learning the Panjabi language and understanding Gurbani in its original wording, much injustice is done in attempting what cannot be translated but only vaguely interpreted.]

In this age of *Kalyug* I, a humble servant of Sikhi, am not the only one who has been blessed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji's *darshan*. Baba Sewa Singh Ji, Baba Puran Singh Ji Kericho-waalay, Bibi Balwant Kaur and Baba Nidhan Singh Ji have also been blessed with Guru Ji's *darshan*. It is most surprising that Guru Ji also gave *darshan* to an African who had no knowledge of *Sikhi* at all. This is a sign of one's previous good deeds. The life stories of these people are given in the following chapters.

Keski - the Fifth Article of Faith

"The Sikh who keeps his hair but does not take *Pahul* (Amrit) is a hypocritical and foolish Sikh. He will not have my *darshan* (vision), he is a sinner.

It is most important for every Sikh to take *Amrit* (see Glossary). Without taking Amrit one cannot be a true Sikh, even if one is born in a Sikh family and keeps unshorn hair. Guru Gobind Singh Ji directed the Sikhs to keep a *keski*, a short *dastar* (Sikh turban) wound neatly around the head to cover and protect the hair (The English translation of *dastar sajaoni* as "tying a turban", while acceptable, is inadequate and even a bit offensive. *Sajaona* is to present or display carefully and neatly and "tying" does not give the same meaning).

History has recorded how much Guru Gobind Singh Ji loved *keski*. He himself honoured Maaee Bhaag Kaur with a *keski* (Maaee Bhag Kaur popularly known as Maaee Bhago led the Majhail Sikhs to the battle at Mukatsar so that they could be redeemed by Guru Ji. They had led Guru Ji during the siege of Anandpur (in 1704 CE)). Guru Ji promised *Amritdhari* (those who had taken *Amrit*) men and women:

"As long as the Khalsa remains distinct, I will give them all my blessings/power." (Sarab-Loh Granth)

Amritdhari Sikh women are Guru's *Khalsa* (see Glossary) and hold the same status as Sikh men. Their *rehat* (code for living) should also be the same. Guru Ji did not discriminate between men and women. In the stormy winds of fashion, the Sikh women should stay firm and remain steadfast in their *Sikhi* principles by preserving their hair neatly in the form of a top-knot covered with *keski*. From the traditional texts relating to the Sikh code of conduct, the following line shows that *keski* was given the same importance as the other four articles of faith:

The drawers, steel bracelet, sword of mercy, wooden comb and the small turban. The one who keeps the discipline of these Five K's is a Sikh. (*Rehatnama* Bhai Chaupa Singh Ji)

The famous English historian Mr. Cunningham in his book (HISTORY OF THE SIKHS) has written about Sikh women "The Sikh women are distinguished from Hindu of their sex by some variety of dress chiefly by the higher top knot of hair"

In Maharaja Ranjit Singh's fort in Lahore and in the Victoria Museum in Calcutta, there are paintings of brave Sikh women. These paintings portray Sikh women wearing *keskis*. In Mehthiana Gurdwara near Jagraon, district Ludhiana, there are statues of brave Sikh women adorned with *keskis*.

Bhai Veer Singh Ji in his book "Rana Surat Singh" has portrayed an impressive picture of Rani Raj Kaur. She is shown wearing a *keski* decorated with a *khanda* the symbol of *Gursikhi*.

Even before World War 1, *Amritdhari* women were strict about keeping the *rehat* (discipline) of *keski*. The Sikh schools and colleges in Ferozepur, Kairon (Amritsar), Jaspalon and Sidhwan (Ludhiana) made it compulsory for the girls to wear *dastar* (Sikh turban). Without wearing the *dastar* they could not study in these schools and colleges. Before the partition of the country, Chief Khalsa Diwan used to hold an educational conference every year. The girls who came from these village schools and colleges to attend these conferences all had their heads covered with

dastars. Most of the women, who took part in the Akali freedom movement and underwent imprisonment, wore *dastars*.

Every family member, men and women, of the famous Sikh scholar Giani Gurbachan Singh Ji Khalsa of Bhindra, wore *keski*. The women in the *kirtan* group of Bhai Sahib Teja Singh Ji of Masthuana used to wear *keski*. In the district of Bhasod in Malwa, there was a society called "Panch Khalsa Diwan", and the women in this group were required to wear *keski*. Before the Akali movement there was a prominent organisation called "Central Majha Diwan". Beside preaching, this organisation instilled in the minds of the people of Panjab the importance of *keski*. Many women started wearing *keski* and abandoned the traditional *dupatta* (also called *chooni*, a traditional piece of fine cloth used with the Panjabi dress, to cover the head).

The women in the Akhand Kirtani Jatha attached to Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji continue to wear *keski* today. They firmly adhere to the principles of wearing a *keski* and portray an upright and distinct life style in the *Gurmatt* and Khalsa tradition. They visibly represent the unique characteristics of the Khalsa. Women in this group consider *keski* to be part of Sikh *rehat* as the fifth article of faith. They firmly adhere to and remind themselves of this discipline and keep intact the distinctiveness bestowed on the Sikhs by the tenth Guru Ji.

Sant Baba Nidhan Singh Ji

Sant Baba Nidhan Singh Ji was born in 1882, in the village Nadhola, in district Hoshiarpur. From his childhood, he enjoyed serving others and doing *simran* (meditating on God's Name. What is God's Name? Dozens of Names for God, used by many religions and sects are given in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Devotional hymns of 36 saintly beings from different faiths, including those of six Guru Sahibans, are given in the living Granth Guru (Sikh holy Scriptures) of the Sikhs. Clearly it does not matter what Name the God-Being is called by, although, *Ik Oangkar*, *Waheguru* and *Satnaam* are the most common amongst the Sikhs. So repetition of any Name for God is acceptable so far the mental and spiritual meditative focus is the God's Being i.e. God Being's *hazar nazar* Divine Presence here and now).

After completing his studies Baba Ji joined the army. His longing for the Lord grew in his heart. One day, while serving in the army, he was so overcome by this sorrowful longing that he headed towards the jungle. There he had *darshan* of (saw) *shaheed* Singhs (martyred Sikhs). The *shaheed* Singhs were reciting *Sukhmani Sahib* and riding on horseback towards *Sach Khand* Hazoor Sahib (One of the five Thrones of *Sikhi*. Hazoor Sahib is at Nanded (*Naded*) in central India, where Guru Gobind Singh Ji was martyred. *Sach Khand* (Plane of Truth or God's court) indicates the holy status of the place. Guru Gobind Singh Ji left for *Sach Khand* from here having completed His earthly mission. His final command to the Khalsa Panth was to always seek the guidance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji respecting it as the Living Guru).

Attracted by the sweet *Bani* of *Sukhmani Sahib*, he started following them until they reached Sri Hazoor Sahib. At Sri Hazoor Sahib, he got busy doing *sewa* (service with humility) day and night and did not worry about his army service. While doing *sewa* of the *sangat* (holy congregation which at Sri Hazoor Sahib includes thousands of visitors from all over the world) he would do *simran*. This made him popular with the *sangat*. Some other *sewadars* (those in the Gurdwara establishment) became jealous and started interrupting his *sewa*. They told him that he could not serve there any longer. Baba Ji thought, "If I cannot serve here, then why should I stay here?" He started back to Punjab. He was very sad at heart. On his way back Baba Ji sat in meditation at a place where Gurdwara Manmaad is now situated (This *d* sound (in Manmaad) peculiar to Indian languages is *ada* pronounced quickly with a rolling tongue. The Sikh iron bangle *kada* is pronounced in this way and most western born children have great difficulty pronouncing this sound).

As he was doing *simran*, he reached a state of intense *Bairag* (see Glossary) and Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave *partakh darshan* (see Glossary). Guru Ji asked, "Where are you going, leaving the *sewa* at Sri Hazoor Sahib?" Guru Ji ordered Baba Ji to go back to Hazoor Sahib and start doing *langar sewa*. Baba Ji said "Guru Ji, I have nothing with me, how can I start this *sewa*?"

Guru Ji replied, "(With) My pocket and your hand!" (*Mera kheesa tera haath!*)

Baba Ji went back to Hazoor Sahib and started the *Langar*. Guru Ji's words came to pass. The *langar sewa* in Baba Nidhan Singh Ji's name continues. Following Baba Ji, Sant Harnam Singh Ji and Baba Atma Singh Ji Moni took up this service. Today, this service (expanded to include accommodation) is being done by Bat Sisa Singh Ji.

Sant Baba Sewa Singh Ji

As Guru Ji bestowed the gift of *sewa* on me, in the same way He directed Baba Sewa Singh Ji of Anandpur Sahib. In 1912, on the occasion of Hola Mahalla, Sant Baba Sewa Singh Ji went to Anandpur Sahib. He was standing at the location where Sri Bauli Sahib now stands. An old woman came along. She was carrying a long thin stick in her hand. Baba Ji asked her, "Mata Ji, I have come to visit the fort. Is this the right place?"

Mata Ji replied by asking, "Have you come to see the ruins?" Baba Ji said, "Mata Ji, these are not ruins. This is a sacred memorial to honour the proud warriors." By this time the old woman had disappeared. Baba Ji's eyes filled with tears. He made a promise to himself that he would not let the historical structures crumble to the ground. After that he never returned home.

Before beginning his project, he sought the help of Sant Ghanaya Ji of Pathlaviae-waalay, in this difficult task. Sant Ghanaya Ji was always eager to help in promoting *Sikhi* and serving the Guru. He told Baba Ji, "I can devote only a little time to this project; you will have to do most of the *sewa* yourself."

"Whatever work you wish to accomplish, tell it to the Lord. He will resolve your affairs; the True Guru is the True Witness." (SGGS p. 91)

In accordance with the Guru's instruction, an *Akhand Paatth* (the continuous reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib to completion) was started. However, there was no drinking water or rations for preparing food for the *paatthis* (those who do *paatth*). Provisions had to be bought. The water for the *Karah Prasaad* (sweet sacrament - see Glossary), and for the *Langar* was brought from Shaheedi Bagh. (Generally, in this publication, capital initial letter *L* has been used for *Langar* when it is mentioned as an institution of *Sikhi*. Otherwise, use of the lower case initial *l* for *langar* may be interpreted as meaning food served from the *Langar* (non-discriminatory kitchen) at the Gurdwara or even at home when prepared for visiting *sangat*).

The water from the historical *Bauli* (large open well located at Anandpur fort) was unpleasant tasting and was infested with germs. Sant Ghanaya Ji decided to invoke Guru Ji's help to get rid of these problems. He prepared the *Karah Prasad* (holy sacramental sweet - see Glossary) and standing in the water of Bauli Sahib, he prayed to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji. As a result of his prayer, the water in the tank turned sweet. With Guru Ji's blessing, the project was started.

The *Langar* was started in a shelter made of reed grass. Baba Ji requested the *sangat* to make donations for the *Langar*. He asked them to contribute just a handful of grain each day taken from their own daily ration. Through collection of donations they were able to provide *langar* for everyone. During Guru Gobind Singh Ji's time, *langar* was served all day long. Baba Ji hoped that the *langar* would be provided every day, even after his death. With Guru Ji's grace and the efforts of the *sangat*, *langar* continues to be served to this day. From Baba Ji's time until now, pure ghee is used in the preparation of food in the *Langar*. During the religious festival of Hola Mahalla in March, when thousands gather, *zarda*, a special dish of rice made with pure ghee is served on the day of Hola, and *Karah Prasaad* made with pure ghee served on the day of the Mahalla (Hola Mahalla festival was started by Guru Gobind Singh Ji to promote the skills of warfare amongst the Sikhs. Literally, *hola* means attack and *mahalla* denotes the capturing of a place).

In those days, there were no modern means of transportation, no trains, and no buses. Baba Ji used to transport the provisions for langar on rented camels. Later on, camels were bought for carrying rations. Even with all the transportation problems, the *langar* was kept going.

Baba Ji first started working on the entrance porch of fort Anandgarh. He made an arrangement to build his own kiln for baking bricks for this. He had to get permission from the government. The Deputy commissioner of Hoshiarpur, who was a Muslim, was very much impressed with Baba Ji's selfless service. He granted Baba Ji open licence for baking bricks in the kiln, even though, normally, a kiln was allowed to turn out only 800,000 bricks in a year. Baba Ji's helpers, Jathedar Sher Singh and Jathedar Narang Singh, both of village Nora, and Bhai Nihal Singh faced a lot of problems trying to provide fuel etc. for the kiln.

During the construction of the entrance porch at Sri Takhat Keshgarh Sahib, a new well was built so that there would be no shortage of water. The *sangat* started enjoying the facilities of water supply for bathing and washing clothes. Now there is a beautiful Gurdwara there and people from far off places visit it. There is running water and separate bathing facilities for ladies and men. *Langar* is served day and night. Baba Sewa Singh passed on the *sewa* to Baba Bhag Singh and Baba Labh Singh.

Baba Labh Singh enjoyed doing *sewa* of *Guru Ghar* (Guru's House) from childhood. Every day he went to Sri Darbar Sahib (Amritsar) and took care of the *sangat's* shoes. He was very humble and polite to the visitors, and they were very pleased with his regular service. A Gursikh, Bhai Karam Singh Ji Haldhi-waalay, was very close to Sant Baba Sewa Singh Ji and dedicated fully to doing *sewa*. Seeing Baba Labh Singh's devotional *sewa*, one day, in 1966, Sant Sewa Singh Ji suggested to Bhai Karam Singh Ji that it was time that the *sewa* of the Gurdwaras of Sri Anandpur Sahib was handed over to Baba Labh Singh. With Bhai Karam Singh Ji's persuasion and spiritual inspiration of Baba Sewa Singh Ji, Baba Labh Singh took over the *sewa* of Sri Anandpur Sahib. He took responsibility of the office work and care of all the Gurdwaras. He dedicated himself to taking care of the visitors by providing facilities for their lodging and *langar*.

Bhagat Puran Singh Ji

Bhagat Puran Singh Ji was born in 1904 in a Khatri (a Hindu caste) family, in a village named Rajewal Rohno, near Samrala in District Ludhiana. His mother, Mehtab Kaur, was from a Sikh family. He got his love for *Sikhi* from her. During his childhood, Bhagat Ji learned that doing good for others is also a good way to serve God. He left his studies after completing matriculation (10th class) due to his father, Chhibu Mai's death. [His name at the time was Ramji Das. Together with his mother, he travelled to Lahore and took shelter at Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, and got employed as a *sewadar* (helper)].

One day, when he was in front of Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, he heard an abandoned child (about 4 years old) crying. The child was mentally and physically handicapped. Bhagat Ji was very kind and took the child to the Gurdwara and gave it milk. He continued taking care of the child at the Gurdwara.

In 1947, during the partition of Panjab State, Bhagat Puran Singh Ji carried the child, by now a teenager, on his back across the new border and brought him to Amritsar. They lived there together. [This spastic child was named Piara Singh and always remained close to Bhagat Ji.] As time went by other sick and handicapped children came to him for help. He inspired the *sangat* by caring for all of the children who came to him. Others also wanted to do something to help out. In the beginning, the *langar* used to come from Guru Ram Das Saran. As time went on, the number of sick and handicapped patients increased. Charity boxes were put at different locations to collect donations. The public started making donations, which helped to lay the foundation of the home for the handicapped, known today as the *Pingalwarah*. This kind of service is very difficult, only rare people can do it. Bhagat Puran Singh Ji carried on with this service till his death in 1992. He became a source of inspiration for many others.

Bibi Balwant Kaur

Bibi Balwant Kaur used to live in Africa. Her husband passed away when she was still quite young. She had very young children. She was very depressed when her husband died. Bibi Ji's previous life's good deeds were rewarded and she developed a love for the Lord's Name. She received *Amrit* and started doing *simran*. In this way many years passed doing *sewa* and *simran* and, in due course, Bibi Ji migrated from Africa to England. Bibi Ji started doing the *sewa* of kirtan when invited by Gursikhs to do Kirtan at home. With the support of the *sangat* Bibi Ji arranged for the construction of Bebe Nanaki Gurdwara at Birmingham. Here the *sangat* assembles and enjoys the bliss of *kirtan*.

After moving to England Bibi Ji had a dream one night. In her dream some divine influence directed her to go to Sultanpur and set up a Gurdwara to honor Bebe Nanaki Ji (Guru Nanak Dev Ji's sister, revered by the Sikhs due to her great affection for Guru Ji and early recognition by her of Guru Ji's mission on earth). Bibi Balwant Kaur immediately made plans to go to India. When she arrived, she found the place that she had seen in her dream in Sultanpur.

She talked to the owner of the land. When he learned that a Gurdwara of Bebe Nanaki Ji was to be built on that land, he was very happy. He said that he would talk to his family about it and would get back to her. He assured her, "I will do whatever is possible. It will be my good fortune if this place is blessed with *katha* and *kirtan*." He touched Bibi Ji's feet respectfully. He then discussed the matter with his family and it was decided to give the land for building the Gurdwara.

Bibi Ji realised, that to build a Gurdwara was a big undertaking. She had no idea how she was going to manage it all by herself. Later that night in another dream, Bibi Ji was assured by the same divine inspiration, that she had the blessing of Satguru. The project was God's own work, which He was going to get done through her.

Bibi Ji returned to England and started a succession of *kirtan* programmes. She made announcements about the building of Bebe Nanaki's Gurdwara. *Sangat* members gave generous financial help. Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Sagoo and Channi Ji gave a great deal of assistance to Bibi Ji. With Guru Ji's grace, the entire project was finally completed. Later Bibi Ji was showered with more Grace from Guru Ji and received inspiration and funds necessary to open an eye clinic for the poor.

Bibi Ji learned from watching a television program, that there was lot of poverty in Ethiopia. She felt really sad watching the poor naked, hungry children, and tears welled up in her eyes. She prayed to Waheguru and asked for a way to help them. She could not bear to see the desperate condition of the poor children. Bibi Ji distributed clothes among the children. She sent food. She went there and had wells dug to combat drought conditions. Bibi Ji has been doing *sewa* for the last fifty years and is respected by the local community. Recognition has been given to her work by the local civic community.

Makindu Gurdwara, East Africa

Sikhs migrated to East Africa in large numbers. Many were employed in doing railway construction work at a place called Makindu. They built a small Gurdwara there, and started holding morning and evening kirtan programmes. When the railway project was completed, the Sikhs moved to Nairobi. Before leaving, they employed a native African *sewadar* (one who does *sewa*) to clean the Gurdwara every day. The man was very lazy and began to neglect his duties. One night, while he was sleeping, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji appeared in his dream. Guru Ji told him, "You are not doing your duty properly." But he continued as before. Guru Ji then gave *partakh darshan* (i.e. was seen in reality). The African was scared. As soon as he got up the next morning, he cleaned the whole Gurdwara. When visiting members of the *sangat* came, he told them about his strange experience. He pointed towards a painting of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and said, "He is the One I saw."

After listening to the African *sewadar*, the visiting Sikhs decided to go to Kericho to see Baba Puran Singh Ji. They thought that perhaps he would know something. Baba Ji explained that there was a divine force at the Gurdwara location. With his encouragement, plans were made for building a new Gurdwara. These days there is a large Gurdwara there with good arrangement for *langar*, which is served day and night, and accommodation. Whoever goes there and prays with faith has his prayers answered. It is surprising that only African people live there and there are no Sikhs. Not much money is donated except by the visiting *sangat*. Whenever any need arises, it is taken care of with Guru Ji's Grace. When Guru Ji showers His blessing on someone, twenty-one generations of that person are redeemed by the Guru's Grace. With Guru Ji's *darshan* by one African, others are now keen to do *sewa* in the Gurdwara.

Look of Divine Grace

(Panjabi words which convey the same meaning: *Kripa dristee* or *Mehar di Nazar*)

In the present age of *Kalyug* (see Glossary), people believe only what they see with their own eyes. Five hundred years ago, Guru Nanak Dev Ji's look of Divine Grace (kindness), bestowed the gift of salvation on many. Guru Ji gave salvation to Koda Bheel gave life to a dead person, and saved the souls of Sajan Thug and Vali Kandhari by pointing them to the right path.

Koda Bheel the Cannibal

During his travels, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, when going from Puri to Rameshwar, went into the jungle in order to save Koda Bheel from his sins. Guru Ji and his companion, Mardana, were dependent on the fruit growing in the jungle for their sustenance. Guru Ji sent Bhai Mardana to search for fruit but he got lost and could not find his way back. He was caught by Koda Bheel, a cannibal living in the jungle. Koda decided to fry Mardana in a cauldron of hot oil and eat him. When Bhai Mardana saw the hot cauldron he prayed to Guru Ji to save him. The all-knowing Guru Ji responded to Mardana's prayer and reached Koda's place in time to save Mardana.

Guru Ji's saintly personality and soothing look of benevolence, cooled not only the hot cauldron but also the burning soul of Koda, who fell at Guru Ji's holy feet in total repentance. Guru Ji freed him from his sins and forgave him. Koda took *charan pahul* (water sanctified with the touch of Guru Ji's holy feet) and adopted *Sikhi*.

Sajan Thug

Sajan Thug had built a temple and a mosque where he lived and also a rest-house for travellers. He showed great hospitality to his guests and served them well; but at night, when everyone went to sleep, Sajan killed the visiting travellers and threw their bodies into a well. He took all their belongings for himself. In the morning he sat down piously with prayer beads in his hands to deceive people. One day, Guru Nanak Dev Ji arrived at his house to deliver him from his sins. Sajan looked after Guru Ji very well during the day. When night fell he asked Guru Ji to go and rest.

Guru Ji asked him, "What is your name?"

He replied, "My name is Sajan."

Guru Ji said, "Sajan, we will sleep after saying our prayers."

Guru Ji asked Mardana to play the rabab, a stringed instrument, and sang a *Shabad*.-

"Bronze is bright and shiny, but when it is rubbed, its blackness appears. Washing it, its impurity is not removed, even if it is washed a hundred times. || 1 || They alone are my friends, who travel along with me; and in that place, where the accounts are called for, they appear standing with me. || 1 || Pause || There are houses, mansions and tall buildings, painted on all sides; but they are empty within, and they crumble like useless ruins. || 2 || The herons in their white feathers dwell in the sacred shrines of pilgrimage. They tear apart and eat the living beings, and so they are not called white. || 3 || My body is like the *simmal* tree; seeing me, other people are fooled. Its fruits are useless, just like the qualities of my body. || 4 || The blind man is carrying such a heavy load,

and his journey through the mountains is so long. My eyes can see, but I cannot find the Way. How can I climb up and cross over the mountain? || 5 || What good does it do to serve, and be good, and be clever? O Nanak, contemplate the *Naam* the Name of the Lord, and you shall be released from bondage. || 6 ||" (SGGS p. 729)

When Sajan heard these words he was sorry for his evil deeds. He fell on Guru Ji's feet and asked for forgiveness. Guru Ji saved him from a life of sin and taught him how to live a good life which would lead to his salvation.

Vali Kandhari

In the same way, to free Vali Kandhari from his *ahankaar* (ego or arrogance - one of the five vices), Guru Nanak Dev Ji stopped at a town called Hasan Abdal. Guru Ji camped at the foot of a hill. Bhai Mardana told Guru Ji that he was very thirsty but could find no water nearby. The all-knowing Guru Ji said, "A Muslim by the name of Vali Kandhari lives at the top of the hill by a spring. There is no water down here; you will have to climb up the hill and ask him for a drink to quench your thirst." Bhai Mardana climbed the hill with great difficulty and reached Vali Kandhari at the top.

Bhai Mardana greeted him politely with Islamic greeting (Bhai Mardana was a Muslim himself) and said with respect, "O saintly *Fakir*, I am very thirsty. Please give me some water to drink." Seeing his strange attire, Vali Kandhari asked him, "Who are you? Where have you come from? What is your name? Are you alone or do you have someone travelling with you?" Bhai Mardana answered, "I am with the revered sage and great *tappa* (man of righteous living) of Punjab, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, whom the Hindus accept as their Guru and the Muslims as their Pir. He has come here after touring the world and liberating people of their sins. He is sitting at the foot of this hill. My name is Mardana Marasi. I am his travelling companion. I play the *rabab* and sing *shabads* (praises of the Lord) with Guru Ji."

Hearing such praise of Guru Nanak, Vali Kandhari was furious with jealousy and told Bhai Mardana, "If your *Pir* (Islamic word for a religious teacher) is so great, why doesn't he use his power and get water from where he is sitting so that you can quench your thirst? It is right to give water to a thirsty person, but in your case, go and tell your *Pir* to use his divine power to quench your thirst."

Bhai Mardana was taken aback by such a rude reply. He returned to Guru Ji and recited what had happened. Guru Ji asked him to try once more and ask for water in all humility. Bhai Mardana climbed up the hot dusty trail in the scorching sun and pleaded again with Vali Kandhari for a drink of water. Vali Kandhari retorted angrily, "Can't your Guru Nanak *tappa*, with such spiritual powers, quench your thirst? Go back and get water from him." Bhai Mardana went back and told Guru Ji that he had not been given any water; that he was very thirsty.

Guru Ji asked Mardana to go up the hill yet once again. Bhai Mardana went up the hill a third time for water. Once again, he humbly greeted Vali Kandhari, and once more pleaded with him for a drink of water. Vali Kandhari replied, "You will not get any water from me until you forsake that Hindu *fakir* and become my disciple." On hearing this, Bhai Mardana said, "Even if you give me water now, I shall not take it from you; but I have a question for you."

Vali Kandhari replied, "What do you wish to ask?"

Bhai Mardana: "Can you tell me how many hearts a person has?"

Vali: "You live with a saint and you don't even know how many hearts a person has?"

Mardana: "With my Guru's Grace I know everything. However, I just want to ask you."

Vali: "You talk too much. A human being has only one heart."

With patience and courage Mardana replied, "Vali Ji you are right. A person has only one heart. I have given mine to my beloved Guru Nanak Dev Ji and bow only to him and him alone. That is why, just to get a drink of water, I don't want to deceive you by bowing to you with my body (but not with my heart) alone. My Guru will quench my thirst Himself." Mardana returned to Guru Ji and told him what had happened, saying "Never have I seen such a stone-hearted person who call himself a man of God, and yet, refuses to give water to a thirsty person. I think he is a lost soul."

Guru Ji said, "Mardana, he has achieved much through meditation and sits on the top of this hill. However, because of his anger and vanity he can now easily slip from his high spiritual attainment. We are here to save him from slipping." Knowing Vali Kandhari's spiritual need, in an act of mercy and to quench Mardana's thirst, Guru Nanak Dev Ji pulled up a stone with his hand. Pure and cool water gushed out from the spot. Bhai Mardana drank the cool clear water to his heart's content. However, Vali Kandhari's water supply on the top of the hill began to be drained. All the water flowed down to the spot from where Guru Nanak Dev Ji had moved the stone. Vali Kandhari became very angry when his water was gone. Using the power gained through austerities, he pushed a huge boulder down the hill straight towards Guru Ji. When Guru Ji saw the enormous rock rolling down towards him, he calmly put out his right hand. With Guru Ji's divine look, the hard rock softened like wax and Guru Ji's hand sunk into it as it came to a stop.

When Vali saw that Guru Ji had stopped the boulder and the water was still running, he was ashamed of himself. He accepted Guru Ji's divine power (and mission) and came down the hill to ask for forgiveness. There is now a beautiful Gurdwara at this place.

The purpose of telling this *saakhee* (see Glossary) is, to emphasise that, although, one can achieve a high state of mind through meditation, one has to guard against the five vices; and especially, replace anger and arrogance with humility and charity. Otherwise all spiritual earnings are wasted away.

The Village of Thugs

One evening Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Mardana arrived at a village. It was a village of robbers. Nobody there welcomed them or served them anything. Guru Ji spent the night under a porch. The villagers thought that Guru Ji and Mardana had a lot of money and so two men were posted to keep an eye on them. They were instructed, "When they fall asleep rob them of all their wealth!" But the opposite happened, and the two thugs fell asleep instead. Guru Ji and Mardana got up during *Amrit vela*, several hours before sunrise, and started off on their journey. When the villagers found out that Guru Ji had already gone, they asked the two thugs to share their loot with them. The thugs explained that they had fallen asleep and had no idea when Guru Ji took off. A few men decided to go out and search for Guru Ji. After going a short way into the jungle they found Guru Ji and Mardana and surrounded them demanding all their wealth.

Guru Ji explained, "We don't have any worldly wealth. We are devotees of God." But the robbers did not believe them. They kept looking at Mardana's *rabab* (musical string instrument) thinking that there must be something hidden in it. They looked in it and on not finding anything, they threatened to kill Guru Ji and Mardana. Guru Ji said, "You can kill us but we have one request. After you kill us, cremate our bodies by burning them up in a fire." The robbers asked from where they would get the fire (for people did not have any matches those days). Guru Ji pointed in one direction and said, "There is a fire burning over there, get it from there."

Four of the robbers guarded Guru Ji, while the other two went to get the fire. When they got there, they saw a strange sight. There was a quarrel going on between *jamdoots* (dark angels of death) and *farishtas* (heavenly messengers) over the destination of a dead person's soul. The *jamdoots* claimed that they had a right to take the soul to hell, for the dead person had not done any good deeds in his life. The *farishtas* agreed but said that as Guru Nanak's look (of divine benevolence) had fallen on the soul, it merited a place in heaven.

Hearing this strange argument, the men realised their error. They returned and told their friends what they had seen and heard. All of them begged for Guru Ji's forgiveness and they became Guru Ji's Sikhs.

We should remember all the good that Guru Ji has done for us. When we go before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, not only should we perform the ceremonial *matha tekan* (bow and pay our respects), we should also remember the valuable teachings of Gurbani and put what we learn into practice in our daily lives. This way we will receive the blessings of Guru Ji and achieve *sukh* (spiritual comfort through contentment) in this life and salvation hereafter.

Bitterness Changed to Sweetness

Not only were the lives of human beings changed, but Guru Nanak Dev Ji's *kripa dristee* (look of divine benevolence) changed the character of the environment around Him. His holy look changed bitter *reethay* (a wild fruit) to sweetness. During His travels to the northern region, before going to Nanak Mata, Guru Nanak Dev Ji had a religious discourse with yogis. Mardana was hungry and the yogis full of *ahankar* (false pride in own spiritual powers) were curious as to how Guru Ji was going to feed Mardana.

Guru Ji was sitting under a tree of *reethay*, which are normally so bitter no one can eat them. Guru Ji looked up and His gracious glance changed the bitter fruit into sweet fruit like dates. He told Mardana to climb up the tree and eat as much of the sweet fruit as he liked. The *reethay* of the same tree still bear sweet fruit and will continue to do so.

Therefore, if we want to receive the blessings of Guru Nanak, we should discard bitterness (like the *reethay*) from our nature and fill our minds with humility. When we talk to anyone about anything, we should win over hearts by being sweet and humble.

These *sakhees* (see Glossary) are 500 years old and they are true. Today's youth ask questions wanting to know how these things are possible. Let me narrate a personal experience. In 1966, I was clean shaven and did not have much knowledge of *Sikhi*. I used to read only *Mool Mantar* and *Sukhmani Sahib*. I had no plans to become a Khalsa Singh. When I went to the Gurdwara people would ask me to keep my hair. I was finding excuses that some day I will take *Amrit* in India. When I went for a holiday to Germany, like Sajan Thug and Koda Bhil, Guru Ji blessed me with His

partakh darshan. He commanded me to take Amrit and take up the *sewa* of *Amrit Sanchaar* (initiating those prepared to follow the Guru's path into the Order of the Khalsa). When I heard this command, my soul became so strong that I started waiting eagerly for the day when I would return to England and receive *Amrit*.

On returning from Germany, I went to Shepherds Bush Gurdwara. On the way home from the Gurdwara, I met Bhai Amrik Singh. He asked me, "Where have you been? I have not seen you for a long time." I told him that I had gone for a holiday. Bhai Amrik Singh inspired in me a desire to serve others. He has a great knowledge of Gurbani and does the *paatth* with due regard for correct pronunciation. It is most enjoyable listening to him when he is doing *paatth* at an *Akhand Paath* (see Glossary). Any one who hears him, becomes enchanted by the Gurbani being read aloud with such devotion. Bhai Sahib advised me that if I was to join Guru Nanak Dev Ji's family (i.e. become a Sikh) the only option was to take *Amrit*. The perfect Guru manifests Himself in the *Panj Piaray* (the Five Beloved Ones) and instils the Name of God in a person. Sant Puran Singh Ji of Kericho had then recently come to England and Bhai Amrik Singh suggested that we both take Amrit when San Ji arranged the next ceremony. I was very pleased that Maharaj (the Great King) had heard my prayers so soon. I was searching for the perfect Guru and had found Him. When I went to the Gurdwara the next day, Giani Amolak Singh Ji was doing melodious *kirtan*. He sang the following *shabad*:

"The frog in the deep well knows nothing of its own country or other lands; just so, my mind, infatuated with corruption, understands nothing about this world or the next. || 1 || O Lord of all worlds: reveal to me, even for an instant, the Blessed Vision of Your *Darshan*. || 1 || Pause || My intellect is polluted; I cannot understand Your state, O Lord. Take pity on me, dispel my doubts, and teach me true wisdom. || 2 || Even the great Yogis cannot describe Your Glorious Virtues; they are beyond words. I am dedicated to Your loving devotional worship, says Ravi Daas the tanner. || 3 ||"
(SGGS p. 346)

I enjoyed listening to the *kirtan*. Later, when we were eating *langar*, Bhai Amrik Singh introduced me to Giani Amolak Singh Ji. He explained that I was a *sehajdhari* Singh (one aspiring to be initiated into the Order of the Khalsa). He explained that I had been directed (by Guru Ji) to take *Amrit* and requested Giani Ji for arrangement of *Amrit Sanchaar*. Giani Ji suggested consulting Baba Puran Singh Ji from Kericho (Africa) who was in London with his daughter who lived at Perivale.

The next day four of us - Bhai Amrik Singh, Bhai Bhagirath Singh, Giani Amolak Singh, and myself went to see Baba Ji. Giani Amolak Singh requested Baba Ji to make arrangements for *Amrit Sanchaar* for those who desired *Amrit* initiation. There were 25 persons who were ready at that time (those who are prepared for Amrit initiation i.e. *Khanday Baatay di Pahul*, are called *Amrit-abhilaakhi* Singhs). Baba Ji told us that there were no other *Amritdhari* Singhs (those who had taken *Amrit* and were qualified to do *sewa* as *Panj Piaray*) who had come over with him. He asked us to find five *Amritdhari* Singhs who did not eat meat and drink liquor, and who recited Gurbani daily and did *simran*. We looked around without success for five such Singhs (it needs to be remembered that there were few Singhs and they were widely dispersed in many towns. The impression should not be gained that there were less than five *rehatwaan* Singhs (those who kept full *rehat*) in London or even in West London in 1964). No arrangement could be made. Baba Ji went back to Africa and six months passed.



Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Nandh Singh, Bhai Sucha Singh, Bhai Nhonihal Singh and Bhai Hardev Singh. Official opening of Coventry Gurdwara. At that time there were not enough Amritdhari Sikhs in the country.

The first Raaen Subaaee in England

(Raaen Subaaee: Continuous, all night singing of Gurbani kirtan)

The very first *Raaen Subaaee* (whole night kirtan without interruption) in England, was held in "The Green" Gurdwara, Southall in 1968, on Guru Gobind Singh Ji's *Avtar Gurburb* celebrating Guru Ji's birthday. Giani Amolak Singh Ji started *Raaen Subaaee* kirtan programmes in England. He did melodious *kirtan* for five hours. This first night, he started the *Raaen Subaaee* with this shabad:

"Among kings, You are called the King. Among land-lords, You are the Land-lord. Among masters, You are the Master. Among tribes, Yours is the Supreme Tribe. || 1 || My Father is wealthy, deep and profound. What praises should I chant, O Creator Lord? Beholding You, I am wonder-struck. || 1 || Pause || Among the peaceful, You are called the Peaceful One. Among givers, You are the Greatest Giver. Among the glorious, You are said to be the Most Glorious. Among revellers, You are the Reveller. || 2 || Among warriors, You are called the Warrior. Among indulgers, You are the Indulger. Among householders, You are the Great Householder. Among yogis, You are the Yogi. || 3 || Among creators, You are called the Creator. Among the cultured, You are the Cultured One. Among bankers, You are the True Banker. Among merchants, You are the Merchant. || 4 || Among courts, Yours is the Court. Yours is the Most Sublime of Sanctuaries. The extent of Your wealth cannot be determined. Your Coins cannot be counted. || 5 || Among names, Your Name, God, is the most respected. Among the wise, You are the Wisest. Among ways, Yours, God, is the Best Way. Among purifying baths, Yours (immersion in Your Name) is the Most Purifying. || 6 || Among spiritual powers, Yours, O God, are the Spiritual Powers. Among actions, Yours are the Greatest Actions. Among wills, Your Will, God, is the Supreme Will. Of commands, Yours is the Supreme Command. || 7 || As You cause me to speak, so do I speak, O Lord Master. What other power do I have? In the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy, O Nanak, sing His Praises; they are so very dear to God. || 8 ||" (SGGS p. 507)

Giani Ji sang the second *Shabad*:

"He is so dear to me; He fascinates my mind; the Lord is the ornament of my heart, the support of the breath of life. The Glory of the Beloved, the Merciful Lord of the Universe, is beautiful; He is infinite and unlimited. O Compassionate Lord of the World, Beloved Lord of the Universe, please join with Your humble soul-bride. My eyes long for the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan; the night passes, but I cannot sleep. I have applied the healing ointment of spiritual wisdom to my eyes; the Naam, the Name of the Lord, is my food. These are all my decorations. Prays Nanak, meditate on the Saint, that he may unite us with our Husband Lord. || 1 ||" (SGGS p. 542)

Giani Ji's daughters, Bhupinder Kaur and Raminder Kaur did beautiful kirtan. They sang the following *shabad* in which Guru Gobind Singh Ji tells us about his childhood:

"My parents travelled to the east and passed through many holy places. On reaching the place where three rivers meet (Praag Raj) many days were spent (by my family) in doing charitable acts. There, at Patna city, I was born. They brought me back to Madhar Des (Panjab) where many different nurses (child-minders) looked after me. I was nurtured and taught a variety of skills. As I matured, my father departed for the heavenly abode (Plane of Truth)." (Bachittar Natak)

Makhan Singh's daughter sang the following *shabad*:

"My friends have come into my home. The True Lord has united me with them. The Lord automatically united me with them when it pleased Him; uniting with the chosen ones, I have found peace. I have obtained that thing, which my mind desired. Meeting with them, night and day, my mind is pleased; my home and mansion are beautified. The unstruck sound current of the Panch Shabad, the Five Primal Sounds, vibrates and resounds; my friends have come into my home. || 1 || So come, my beloved friends, and sing the songs of joy, O sisters. Sing the true songs of joy and God will be pleased. You shall be celebrated throughout the four ages. My Husband Lord has come into my home, and my place is adorned and decorated. Through the Shabad, my affairs have been resolved. Applying the ointment, the supreme essence, of divine wisdom to my eyes, I see the Lord's form throughout the three worlds. So join with me, my sisters, and sing the songs of joy and delight; my friends have come into my home. || 2 ||"
(SGGS p. 764)

Sardar Baora's son sang the following *shabad*:

Relying on Your Mercy, Dear Lord, I have indulged in sensual pleasures. Like a foolish child, I have made mistakes. O Lord, You are my Father and Mother. || 1 || It is easy to speak and talk, but it is difficult to accept Your Will. || 1 || Pause || I stand tall; You are my Strength. I know that You are mine. Inside of all, and outside of all, You are our Self-sufficient Father. || 2 || O Father, I do not know, how can I know Your Way?

He frees us from bondage, O Saints, and saves us from possessiveness. || 3 || Becoming Merciful, my Lord and Master has ended my comings and goings in reincarnation. Meeting with the Guru, Nanak has recognised the Supreme Lord God. || 4 || 27 || 97 || (SGGS p. 51)

This was the first time I experienced the bliss of a *Raaen Subaaee*. The children of the Granthi Ji Joginder Singh of Singh Sabha Gurdwara played the tabla and also did *kirtan* that night. The whole *sangat* experienced the spiritual joy of Gurbani *kirtan*. There were about 400 people in the *sangat* and many had come from other areas. Tea and *langar* were served all night.

AMRIT CHHAKNA (I receive the Divine Gift of Amrit Initiation)

(The reader is advised to refer to the Glossary for some key *Sikhi* words like *Amrit*, *Naam simran* as these are frequently repeated from this chapter onwards.)

Soon after the first *Raaen Subaaee* kirtan at Southall, many Sikhs migrated from Africa to England. Giani Amolak Singh Ji was able to arrange *Amrit Sanchar* by five *Amritdhari Singhs*, the *Panj Piaray*, who were: Bhai Jawala Singh, Bhai Thakur Singh, Bhai Mahinder Singh Lai, Giani Amolak Singh and Bhai Prithpal Singh. Bhai Mihan Singh took the responsibility of acting as Granthi Singh attending Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji during the ceremony.

This *Amrit Sanchar* was held at Beaconsfield Road Gurdwara on 13 April, 1969. It was the *Vaisakhi* day, the anniversary of the very first *Amrit Sanchar* ceremony by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699. Twenty-five Sikh men and women took Amrit in the full traditional manner. Singhs and Singhanis alike adorned themselves by tying *dastars* (Sikh turbans). Those who took Amrit became completely immersed in *Naam*. Seeing this scene, Giani Amolak Singh Ji remarked, that such an atmosphere used to be created in the *Amrit Sanchar* ceremonies during Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji's times.

The hukamnama for the *Amrit Sanchar* was: -

"The Perfect Guru has attached me to His feet. I have obtained the Lord as my companion, my support, my best friend. Wherever I go, I am happy there. By His Kind Mercy, God united me with Himself. || 1 || So sing forever the Glorious Praises of the Lord with loving devotion. You shall obtain all the firsts of your mind's desires, and the Lord shall become the companion and the support of your soul. || 1 || Pause || The Lord is the support of the breath of life. I am the dust of the feet of the Holy people. I am a sinner, but the Lord made me pure. By His Kind Mercy, the Lord blessed me with His Praises. || 2 || The Supreme Lord God cherishes and nurtures me. He is always with me, the Protector of my soul. Singing the Kirtan of the Lord's Praises day and night, I shall not be consigned to reincarnation again. || 3 || One who is blessed by the Primal Lord, the Architect of Destiny, realises the subtle essence of the Lord. The Messenger of Death does not come near him. In the Lord's Sanctuary, Nanak has found peace. || 4 ||"
(SGGS p. 623)

Guru Amardas Ji's words are that God has put light in every human being. When this light extinguishes, the body dies. Human life is the highest life form which a soul can achieve (the stress here is on life form. Human life is a means for salvation and not an end in itself for the soul). Only a human being is blessed with the knowledge that recitation of *Naam* can enlighten the soul and raise it to higher planes of knowledge (See Japji Sahib *shabads* 34 to 37 (Dharam Khand to Sach Khand)). Some Gursikhs' past deeds are so strong that when the *Panj Piaray* place their hands on the Gursikhs' heads and teach them how to recite *Naam*, their minds are illuminated immediately. I have witnessed many such *kautaks* (happenings - see Glossary) during *Amrit Sanchar* ceremonies, especially in the case of Sikh women. For some, the enlightenment stays for an hour and then fades away, while for others it lasts for up to a week. Others have such unclean minds that it is difficult to instil the spirit of *Naam* in their hearts. Such people have to work very hard for the gift of *Naam*.

When I received *Amrit*, I went through the most unusual experience. While the *Panj Piaray* were teaching me the recitation of *Naam*, my eyes closed but I could "see" everything going on around me. Even afterwards, when I had gone home, *simran* continued with my every breath. I was not able to sleep that night. All night *simran* continued subconsciously. I felt as if a very bright lamp was glowing inside me. The brightness was like that of a flash of lightening. Only that the lightening vanishes after a few seconds, but this light inside me continued to shine on. It is very difficult to describe this experience.

When one experiences such enlightenment, there is much spiritual joy in reciting *Naam*. One feels like meditating continuously. The benefits of my previous meditations kept my inner light glowing for weeks, but all too soon, my work environment caused my mind to waver and the inner glow was turned off. Gursikhs undergo many unusual spiritual experiences. It is possible for the inner lamp to be lighted again. However, the vices of lust and anger are very powerful and they can extinguish this light. When one works hard against them, the lamp glows bright once more. And so this inner spiritual enlightenment glows or fades according to the influence of worldly vices. To keep it glowing, continuous *Naam simran* (see Glossary) is required. Those who have never done any *simran*, their spiritual lamps have never been lit; therefore, they are unable to light the inner lamp in others. Those saintly beings who have been sent by Satguru to preach, their spiritual lamps continue to glow bright. To attain salvation it is necessary to have an enlightened mind.

Of the Sikhs who took *Amrit* initiation that day, several did *sewa* for many years in the Gurdwara, washing the *Langar* utensils. Some of their names are: Bhai Bhagirath Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, Bhai Devinder Singh, Bibi Prakash Kaur, Bhai Hardial Singh and this servant of the Guru. Many Sikhs had come from Birmingham and Coventry for this *Amrit Sanchar*, the very first in England. After this, a series of *Amrit Sanchar* programmes was started. It was just a week after I became *Amritdhari* Khalsa, that some American Sikh men and women came to England for receiving *Amrit* initiation also. Giani Amolak Singh Ji asked me to serve as one of the *Panj Piaray*. At that time I recalled the *kautak* (unusual happening) which had taken place while I was in Germany, when Guru Gobind Singh Ji had blessed me with his *partakh darshan* and instructed me to take *Amrit* and then to do the *sewa* of *Amrit Sanchar*. Guru Ji's words came to pass. Within a week of taking *Amrit*, I was given the *sewa* of taking part in *Amrit Sanchar* as one of the *Panj Piaray*. I felt unqualified for such a service. Look at Guru Ji's greatness. Guru Maharaj blessed me to do service as one of the *Panj Piaray*, just like Guru Harkrishan Ji touched Chhaju's head with his cane and blessed him with knowledge, and thus enabled him to recite the meanings of the stanzas from Gita, so Guru Ji raised His servant to do such exalted *sewa*.

The Story of Chhaju Ram Ji

Pundit Lalu of Kurukshetra was very proud of his knowledge. Guru Har Krishan Ji, stopped in Kurukshetra on his way to Delhi. There was a large *Sangat* with Guru Ji. Seeing such a big gathering Pundit Lalu asked the reason and was told that the eighth Guru, Guru Harkrishan (who received the divine Light of Guru Nanak at the age of five) was blessing people. Pandit Lalu said in *ahankar* (self-centred arrogance) that he would only believe in the Guru Ji's divinity if He could explain the meanings of stanzas (*shlokas*) from the Hindu holy book of Gita. Guru Harkrishan Ji, when told about this (being aware of the indirect doubt expressed about Guru Nanak Dev Ji's divine mission) said to the arrogant Pundit, "If I explain the meanings of the *shlokas*, you will think someone else taught me. Bring any man from your town who is ignorant and illiterate, and with the blessing of *Maharaj* (the Great King i.e. the Supreme Power), he will explain the meanings of the *shlokas*."

The Pundit went away and brought back with him a man called *Chhaju*, a humble water carrier. He was dumb, deaf and illiterate. He had never learned to read or write. Guru Ji placed the tip of his hand-cane on Chhaju's head and his mind was enlightened and his speech and hearing was restored. Guru Ji told the Pundit to read *shlokas* for Chhaju Ram to interpret in popular language (Partly the arrogance of the Pundits those days was due to their knowledge of Sanskrit, the difficult and sacred language of the Vedas. Guru Nanak Dev Ji's mission was to preach *Sikhi*, an ideology of the people and for the people's benefit, in popular language. Chhaju's episode should be seen in this context. Also, this was a time when the very young Guru Ji's credentials to Guruship were being challenged by those opposed). The Pundit read a *shloka* and Chhaju Ram explained the meaning. The Pundit fell at Guru Ji's feet realising Guru Ji's divinity and begged for forgiveness.

Guru Ji preached that one should do *simran* and give up *ahankar*. Everyone paid homage to Guru Ji. Chhaju Ram became very devoted to Guru Ji and started spending time in *Noam simran*. I said to Giani Amolak Singh Ji that, according to Guru Ji's teachings the fifth article of faith was *keski*. Giani Ji explained during the *Amrit Sanchar*, that *keski* must be kept as one of the five *kakars*. The white American Sikhs especially accepted this injunction and men and women adorned *keskis* on their heads.

Those who took part in *Amrit Sanchar* programme in the second week *Panj Piaray* were Bhai Amrik Singh, Giani Amolak Singh, Bhai Mahinder Singh Ji Lai, Bhai Khadag Singh and myself. Bhai Avtar Singh did the *sewa* of Granthi Singh. In the third week there was a big programme in Leicester of *Raaen Subaaee and Amrit Sanchar*. Bhai Joginder Singh, Bhai Onkar Singh, Bhai Inderjeet Singh, Bhai Pakhar Singh, and Bibi Chanan Kaur and many others from the *sangat* received Amrit initiation and became Khalsa of the Guru.

In this way, a movement for holding *Amrit Sanchar* ceremonies in England was started.

Yathra to Nankana Sahib

(Yathra: "pilgrimage" but see Glossary)

One day when I went to the Shepherds Bush Gurdwara, the secretary made an announcement, that on 23 November 1969, Guru Nanak Dev Ji 's 500th *Prakaash Utsav* (Birthday Gurpurab) was going to be celebrated with much enthusiasm and splendour at Nankana Sahib (in Pakistan). A bus was arranged for the *yathra* and many cars were going also. If anyone was interested in going, they should enlist their names.

At that time the *sangat* was small, but even so, fifty people got ready to go. I also gave my name. In those days all used to participate in doing *sewa*. There were only a few people in the *sangat* who could do *kirtan* or *katha* (deliver a sermon - see Glossary). Slowly the number of people increased in our *sangat*. Before our journey started we had already purchased the building of Gurdwara Havelock Road, Southall. When the time came for our departure we all gathered in Gurdwara Singh Sabha because the Gurdwara in Shepherds Bush was too small. The High Commissioner of Pakistan came to see us off. The group did *Ardaas* (prayer and supplication) for our safe and successful journey, and we set off for Pakistan. This was the first group from England ever to undertake such a *yathra*.

Bhai Sahib Ranjit Singh was leading this group. We went from Dover to Belgium via Ferry and then reached Germany. From Germany we travelled to Austria. When we arrived at the border of Austria, we were stopped. We were not allowed to proceed as we did not have visas for Austria. We had visas for every other country, but we had listened unwisely to some people who had told us that there was no need for the Austrian visa. Bhai Ranjit Singh collected all our passports and went back to Germany to get the required visas.

Just as one needs a visa to go from one country to another, in the same way, the visa of humility and meditation is needed to enter *Dargah* (God's Court or *Sachkhand* i.e the Plane of Truth). When Guru Nanak Dev Ji visited *Sachkhand* he brought back with him *Naam* and humility. It is very important to recite *Naam* and to do *sewa* (selfless service with humility). If God's Name and humility do not reside in a person's heart then, just as we had to go back to Germany to get the visa, the person will have to take birth time again in this world, before he is allowed to enter *Dargah*.

We spent the night in Austria. The next morning we left at five o'clock in the morning. We went from Austria to Turkey. When we were passing through Turkey we saw many attractive landscapes. On one side there were hills and on the other there was the surging sea. It was a beautiful sight indeed.

Germany and Belgium have made great progress despite much destruction during the war. There are wide highways with attractive stopping places for tea and refreshments. Turkey is a big country and it took us many days to cross it. There is a stretch of sea also and it takes about half an hour to cross it. The rest of the journey was completed by road.

After Turkey, we reached Iran, where there are also quite a few beautiful places. From Iran, we travelled through Afghanistan and finally reached Pakistan. Our first stop was Gurdwara Panja Sahib. We took our baths at this historical shrine. When we went inside for Guru *darshan*, there was no *prakaash* (see Glossary) of Guru Granth Sahib Ji. We were surprised to find that even

though this was a historical Gurdwara there was no *sewadar* to look after the premises, nor was there any arrangement for *langar*.

There were only some policemen sitting in one room. One of us did the *prakaash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and we all joined in the *Ardaas*, "O True Lord, we are very thankful to You for the *darshan* of this holy place (of Panja Sahib). With your Grace we have reached here safely. After the *Ardaas* the *Hukamnama* (random reading of a *shabad* for guidance) from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was taken.

It had taken us three weeks to arrive at Panja Sahib Gurdwara. After staying for a few hours we set off for Nankana Sahib. After about eight hours we finally reached Nankana Sahib at about eight o'clock in the evening. Upon arrival we said *Ardaas*, "O True Lord, with your Grace we have reached here safely in time to celebrate your *Prakaash* Gurburb

"I have come so far, seeking the Protection of Your Sanctuary. Within my mind, I place my hopes in You; please, take my pain and suffering away!" (SGGS p. 763)

In celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's *Prakaash Utsav*, the Gurdwara was decorated with many beautiful lights. Arrangement was made for a massive *Nagar Kirtan* (procession - see Glossary). It was a beautiful sight. The *palaki* (palanquin) for Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's *swari* (majestic ride) was decorated well before it was time to set out. It was covered with fresh flowers. At the beginning of the *Nagar Kirtan* a procession of young boys performed *gatka* (martial art) demonstrations. The *Nagar Kirtan* was led by the *Panj Piaray* walking just in front of the *swari* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Once the *Nagar Kirtan* started, there was a display of fireworks. After visiting many other Gurdwaras at Nankana Sahib (marking the main events of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's early life), the *Nagar Kirtan* finally arrived at Gurdwara Janam Asthaan (the Gurdwara located where Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born in 1469).

We thanked Maharaj Ji for bringing us all the way from London for *darshan* of these holy Gurdwaras. After the *Prakash Ustav* celebrations, members of the UK *jatha* (group) dispersed to visit their own families and relatives in India.

"The rivers and streams which separate may sometime be united again. In age after age, that which is sweet, is full of poison; how rare is the Yogi who understands this. That rare person who centres his consciousness on the True Guru, knows intuitively and realises the Lord. Without the Naam, the Name of the Lord, the thoughtless fools wander in doubt, and are ruined. Those whose hearts are not touched by devotional worship and the Name of the True Lord, shall weep and wail loudly in the end. Nanak speaks the Truth; through the True Word of the Shabad, those long separated from the Lord, are united once again. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 439)

I went on to visit other Gurdwaras of India. First I visited Sri Harmandar Sahib and other Gurdwaras of Amritsar. Then I visited Sri Taran Taran Sahib, Goindwal Sahib and other nearby Gurdwaras. I then went to Sri Anandpur Sahib. After visiting Sri Hazoor Sahib and other Gurdwaras of Delhi, I came back to Punjab. From Amritsar I returned through Pakistan with the original *jatha* (group) to I England by road, the way we came. The entire *yathra* lasted nearly three months.

Amrit Prachaar

(The mission of *Amrit Sanchaar* - see Glossary)

[The Guru's challenge "*If you wish to play the game of love then (be prepared to) place your head on the palm of your hand and come my way.*" (Guru Nanak Dev Ji SGGS p. 1412). Guru Nanak's Tenth Light, Guru Gobind Singh Ji repeated the same challenge on the Vaisakhi day in 1699, and made the partaking of *Amrit* or *Khanday Baatay di Pahul*, a necessary condition for following in His footsteps.]

Guru Nanak Dev Ji says that wherever good men go, they will always preach whatever is good. Once, Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Bhai Mardana went to a village. The people there were ill mannered and inhospitable. They never did any good for anyone. They showed no respect for anyone. They showed no respect even to the saintly Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Bhai Mardana who stayed there for only one night. The next morning as Guru Ji was about to leave, he said to the villagers, "May you continue living here forever."

Then they went to another village. In this next village, the people were hospitable and kind. They served all visitors very well. They took very good care of Guru Ji. The next day when Guru Ji was about to leave he turned to these villagers and said, "May you be uprooted from this place." Mardana was mystified to hear Guru Ji's words. He asked, "What does this mean, Guru Ji? You blessed those who gave you no respect, and offered you no food, and yet, you cursed those who served you well."

Guru Ji replied, "Wherever hospitable and polite people go, they take their good qualities with them and spread these good qualities amongst others. That is why I said to these people to move out and preach good qualities wherever they go. On the other hand, I "blessed" the people with bad qualities to stay where they were so that others may not be influenced by them." Mardana replied, "Only you understand your ways and no other."

Like those people with good qualities, Bhai Gurnam Singh, Bhai Madan Singh, Bhai Shingara Singh, Giani Amolak Singh, Bhai Banta Singh and others like them eventually settled in UK and started to spread *Sikhi*. They started the *sewa* of *Akhand Paatths*. Sikh migrants started arriving from Africa and India and started preaching *Sikhi*. Giani Amolak Singh did the service of teaching *Gurbani kirtan* with tabla and harmonium.

When Sant Baba Puran Singh Kericho-waalay came to England, many Gurdwaras were built. He started *Amrit Prachaar* (preaching the necessity for everyone who wanted to follow the Guru's path to partake of *Amrit*). Many great preachers and saintly lovers of Waheguru's Name came to England and with their spiritual presence and Guru Ji's Grace, *Sikhi* started prospering. Those who had drifted away from *Sikhi* started returning to the Guru's path. Sant Ishar Singh Raarhay-waalay also came to England to spread the Guru's Word and many Sikhs re-adopted Sikh identity. A *jatha* (group) consisting of Bhai Puran Singh Ji, his wife, Channi Ji, Bhai Mehar Singh and Bibi Harjit Kaur came and preached *Sikhi*. Many people were impressed with their teachings and consequently I underwent *Amrit* initiation. After this, many *kathakaars*, people who preach *Gurbani* and Sikh tradition, like Bhai Sant Singh Ji Maskin, Bhai Jaswant Singh Ji Parwana, Professor Santokh Singh Ji and many other intellectuals continued to visit UK. Soon *Sikhi* began to spread. Sant Baba Maan Singh also came and preached. People were impressed by his message. He persuaded many to become *Amritdhaari* Gursikhs.

Chacha Darshan Singh of Southall also formed a group *Amrit Prachaar*, preaching and inspiring people to receive Amrit. Bhai Sahib Bhai Kishan Singh Ji Parwana from India and his *kirtani jatha* were the first professional *raagis* to perform classical *kirtan*. Bhai Joginder Singh, the President of Shephard's Bush Gurdwara, made all of their arrangements. Giani Amolak Singh, Giani Surjit Singh, Bhai Sewa Singh Lalli, Bhai Banta Singh and Bibi Kirpal Kaur formed a *kirtani jatha* and set the trend for *kirtan* programmes and *Raaen Subaaees*. In time, Bhai Gurnam Singh got the Akhand Kirtani Jatha registered and the membership started increasing day by day. The *Sangat* appointed Bhai Gurnam Singh as *jathedar*, the head of the group. He served the Jatha devotedly by arranging programmes, scheduling them, and then informing every one of the date, time, and place to meet. Bhai Sahib Ji also planned the *Amrit Sanchaars*. Sometimes he also served as one of the *Panj Piaray* during *Amrit Sanchaar* ceremonies. He started arranging the service of *kirtan* in people's homes. He planned *Raaen Subaaee* and various other programmes in all parts of England. He managed the stage during programmes. He also sent subscriptions of the *Sura* magazine, a publication of Akhand Kirtani Jatha. He made a generous contribution of his valuable time and effort to uplift the position of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha and keep it in good spirit.

Bhai Ajit Singh Bhogal of Delhi served the Jatha by helping in *Amrit Sanchaars*. Sometimes, one's past good deeds are rewarded and somehow opportunities for doing *sewa* arise. Bhai Sahib arrived from India and went to Gravesend. He was looking for a room to stay. Someone told him that there was a vacant room in Bhai Harbaksh Singh's house. Bhai Sahib took the address in Gravesend and set off to enquire about it. He rang the doorbell and Bhai Harbaksh Singh opened the door. Bhai Ajit Singh greeted him, "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh," and then enquired about the room. Bhai Harbaksh Singh happily gave him a room and so Bhai Sahib moved in. Every morning at *Amrit vela* (see Glossary) Bhai Sahib would get up and after taking a bath, start *simran* (meditative recitation of "Waheguru" Naam). The atmosphere of the house became very peaceful as a result of Waheguru *simran*. Harbaksh Singh asked Bhai Sahib to explain to him the proper way to recite *simran* as he received great peace when he heard others doing it. Bhai Sahib told him that only *Panj Piaray* could teach the correct method for *swas-swas simran*. One has to experience the *Amrit Sanchaar* ceremony to receive this blessing. So Bhai Harbaksh Singh took Amrit. He became a Gursikh and started doing service for the *Jatha*. As he had a very big house, the *Amrit Sanchaar* ceremonies were held there. He lived at 77 Peas Road, North Fleet, Kent. Harbaksh Singh was also one of the five members of the "Gagan Damama Baajio" Paper. With Bhai Ajit Singh's inspiration, many Sikhs took Amrit in Gravesend. After a while Bhai Harbaksh Singh moved to Chatham and the baptism ceremonies were performed in the houses of either Bhai Gulzar Singh or Bhai Ram Singh.

The number of Singhs in the Jatha continued to increase. *Sangat* from other areas also started asking for *kirtan* programmes, so the *kirtan* and *Raaen Subaaee* trend gained momentum. Many Singhs and Singhanis started learning *kirtan*. The *kirtani jatha* of Bhai Banta Singh, Bibi Kirpal Kaur, Bhai Sewa Singh Lalli, Bhai Rajinder Singh, Bhai Kuldip Singh, Bhai Manjit Singh, Bhai Ajaib Singh and Bhai Mahinder Singh was formed. Bhai Sarabjit Singh and Bhai Trilochan Singh did the *sewa* of tabla. Those who took part in *Amrit Prachaar* were: Bhai Ajit Singh Bhogal, Bhai Shingara Singh Nihang, Bhai Swaran Singh Malhi, Bhai Joginder Singh Leicester, Bhai Gurnam Singh, Bhai Ram Singh, Bhai Nirmal Singh, Bhai Jarnail Singh, Bhai Raghvir Singh, Bhai Sohan Singh, Bhai Onkar Singh and myself. Bhai Sahib Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji continued to take a prominent part in doing Sikh missionary work.



Bhai Rama Singh Ji doing kirtan during the tour of Norway accompanied by Bhai Ajaib Singh, Bhai Prithipal Singh, Bhai Nachhatar Singh, Bhai Kuldip Singh and Bibi Ji



A memorable photo during Amrit Sanchaar (see Glossary), Sikhi Prachaar tour of Australia. From left to right; Bhai Subeg Singh, Bhai Rajinder Singh, Bhai Rama Singh, Bhai Hardial Singh and Bhai Gurdip Singh.



Bhai Harbhajan Singh Sagoo and family doing kirtan at Bebay Nanaki Gurdwara Sahib, Birmingham.



At New York, Bhai Pala Singh ji's daughter doing kirtan accompanied by his son playing tabla drums. Giani Ji is sitting with them and on the left is Bhai Pala Singh himself.



During Amrit Sanchaar (see Glossary) functions at Lemington Spa. From left to right; Bhai Sohan Singh, Bhai Raghbir Singh, Bhai Rama Singh, Bhai Jarnail Singh and Bhai Pritam Singh



American Singhs doing kirtan at San Francisco (America) during the Prachaar tour. From left to right; Bhai Rama Singh, Bhai Dupinder Singh and Bhai Mohan Singh doing kirtan accompanied by Bhai Uptej Singh (Leyton, England) playing tabla drums.



In America, Bhai Jagdeesh Singh and Bibi Jagjit Kaur doing kirtan.



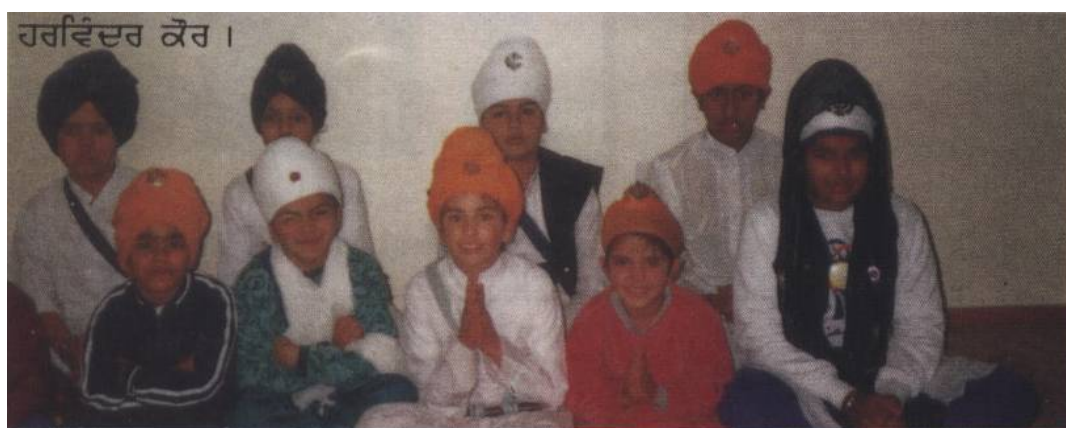
Sikh children doing kirtan at Toronto (Canada) during Sikhi Prachar. Bibi Ravinder Kaur, Bibi Rupinder Kaur doing kirtan and Bhai Sukhvinder Singh playing the tabla, while the sangat is listening.



Sikh ladies of New Zealand. The Sikh ladies can preserve the Sikh nation and heritage by becoming Amritdhari (see Glossary).



In Singapore, Gurleen Kaur, the daughter of Bhai Sukhjinder Singh and Bibi Kulwant Kaur, doing kirtan. With her are Bhai Rama Singh Ji and Bibi Ji.



Little Sikh children of New Zealand who love Sikhi, in full Sikhi dress.



During the Gurmat Prachaar tour of Thailand, on Bhai Rama Singh Ji arrival are seen Bhai Balvir Singh, Bibi Harvinder Kaur and Singhs from Germany and Thailand.



During the Prachaar tour of New Zealand, with the sangat are seen Bhai Mohinder Singh and Bhai Piara Singh



Heavenly scene of the Nagar Kirtan (local kirtan) procession led by the Panj Piaray (the Five Beloved Ones) taken out by the Sikh Naujawan Sabha of Malaysia with the Sangat's support.



A scene of the sangat which had taken Amrit during the Amrit Prachar tour of Fiji. Over 80 members of the Sangat took Amrit on that occasion.



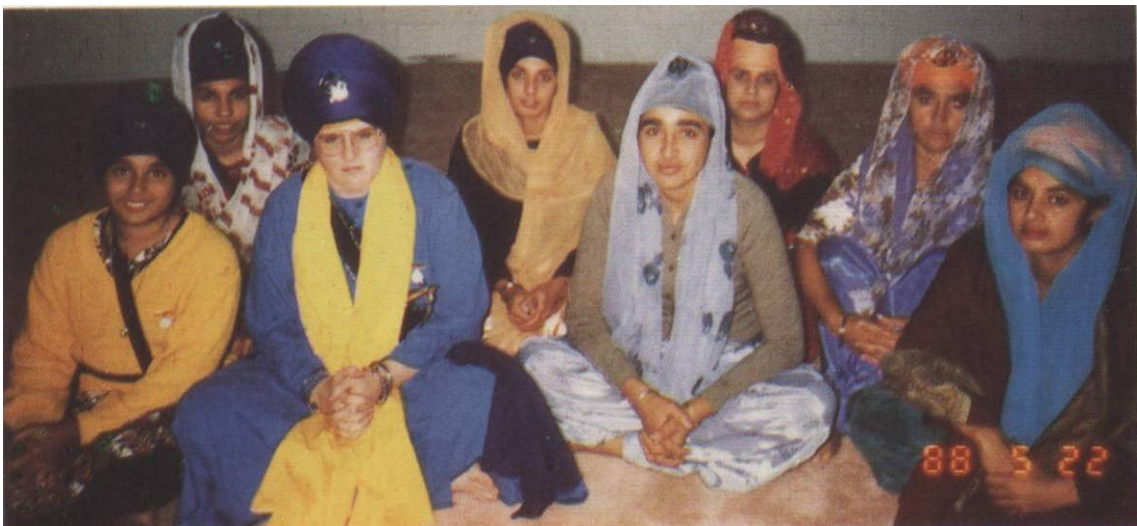
A scene of the sangat on the occasion of the Dharmic Diwan (religious function) held at the Khalsa College in Fiji. It needs to be remembered that Khalsa Colleges were first set up outside India in Vancouver (Canada) and in Fiji.



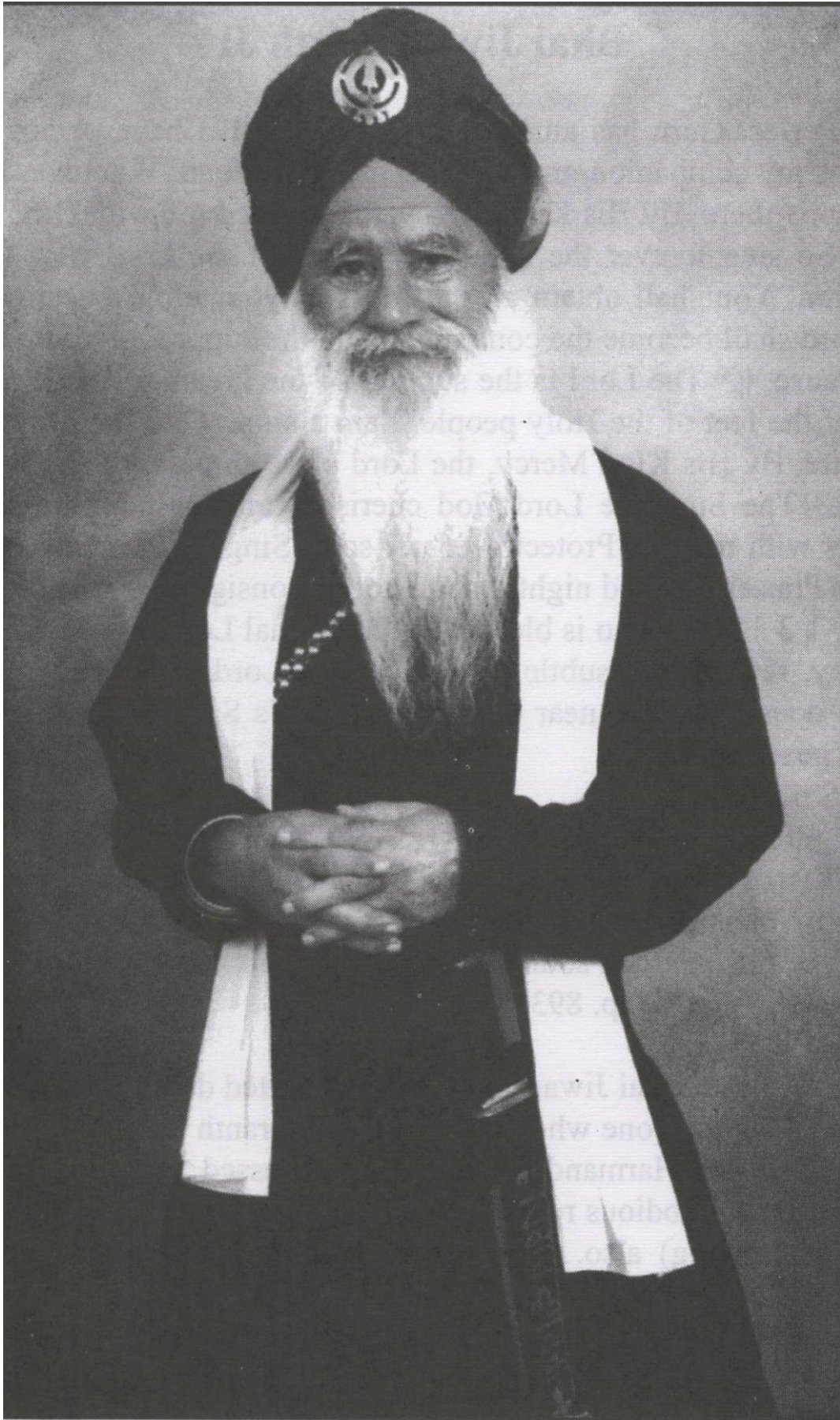
Sangat members who took Amrit during the Prachaar tour in Singapore.



Bhai Rama Singh doing kirtan on the occasion with Bhai Sukhdev Singh (playing tabla), Bibi Harvinder Kaur and Bhai Ranjit Singh (right).



Gursikh girls with the American Bibi Jagjit Kaur during the Prachaar tour of Australia.



Bhai Sahib Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji, Founder of the Khalsa Schools

Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji

"The Perfect Guru has attached me to His feet. I have obtained the Lord as my companion, my support, my best friend. Wherever I go, I am happy there. By His Kind Mercy, God united me with Himself. || 1 || So sing forever the Glorious Praises of the Lord with loving devotion. You shall obtain all the fruits of your mind's desires, and the Lord shall become the companion and the support of your soul. || 1 || Pause || The Lord is the support of the breath of life. I am the dust of the feet of the Holy people. I am a sinner, but the Lord made me pure. By His Kind Mercy, the Lord blessed me with His Praises. || 2 || The Supreme Lord God cherishes and nurtures me. He is always with me, the Protector of my soul. Singing the Kirtan of the Lord's Praises day and night, I shall not be consigned to reincarnation again. || 3 || One who is blessed by the Primal Lord, the Architect of Destiny, realises the subtle essence of the Lord. The Messenger of Death does not come near him. In the Lord's Sanctuary, Nanak has found peace. || 4 ||"
(SGGS p. 623)

"The Kirtan of the Lord's Praise is a priceless diamond. It is the ocean of bliss and virtue. In the Word of the Guru's Bani is the wealth of the unstruck sound current. The Saints hold the key to it in their hands." (SGGS p. 893)

In 1942, Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji first started doing *sewa* when he became a *paatthi* (one who reads Sri Guru Granth Sahib) of *Akhand Paatths* in Sri Harmandir Sahib (*Akhand Paatth* is the continuous reading to completion of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). He impressed everyone with his flawless and melodious recitation of *paath*. He started learning *kirtan* (Gurbani singing) also. The first shabad he learnt was:- "*Dukh bhanjan Tera Naam Ji—*" (meaning "Your Name is the destroyer of pain and ailments"). This *shabad* would continue to resound in his ears. Soon, he started performing kirtan proficiently and was eventually appointed to do *kirtan* at Harimandar Sahib (Golden Temple) at Amritsar. After two years he went to Goindwal Sahib and continued doing *kirtan* for a long time. Iqbal Singh accompanied him on tabla. His *kirtan* had a lasting impression on people because he had no greed for money. He met Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji and went with him to Ludhiana. There he started taking part in *Raaen Subaaee kirtans*.

I met Bhai Sahib during Dusehra at Bangla Sahib Gurdwara (Delhi) in 1972 (Dusehra is a Hindu festival held in October/November, celebrating the destruction of the demon king Rawan by god Rama). I requested him to come to England. Bhai Sahib replied that he was also eager to visit England and to meet the *sangat*, but he did not know anyone. I told Bhai Sahib that Giani Amolak Singh was in England. He was pleased to know this and asked me to convey his greetings to Giani Ji. God willing, he would visit England.

Bhai Sahib Ji did service as Head *Granthi* (see Glossary) of Patna Sahib Gurdwara. He was there for nine or ten years. Bhai Sahib used to collect wheat from Punjab and take it to Patna Sahib for the *Langar*. He taught *kirtan* to many devotees and brought them ever closer to God. The Gurdwara committee sent him abroad to preach, mainly in Canada. He used to do *kirtan* and give *katha* sermons explaining *Gurbani*. Many were inspired to take *Amrit*. At that time in Canada, it was difficult to find five *Amritdhari* Sikhs to do *Amrit Sanchar*. So Amrik Singh and I went there from England for this purpose. This first *Amrit Sanchar* in Vancouver was held in Tatt Khalsa Gurdwara. People came from faraway, including Sikhs from America. Eighty people were ready to receive *Amrit*. The *Amrit Sanchar* programme started at 2 a.m. and ended in the afternoon. When the procession of eighty Sikhs who had received Amrit came out with the *Panj Piaray* into the *sangat*,

everyone was impressed. Many others were inspired to take *Amrit*. This was especially the case with Surjeet Singh's family, who received *Amrit* soon after and became Khalsa Singhs. After *Amrit Sanchaar* I sang the following *shabad*:

"Separated from the Lord for countless lifetimes, the self-willed *manmukh* (see Glossary) sutlers in pain, engaged in acts of egotism Beholding the Holy Saint, I found God; O Lord of the Universe, I seek Your Sanctuary. || 1 || The Love of God is very dear to me When I joined the Sat Sangat, the Company of the Holy People, the Lord, (he embodiment of peace, came into my heart. || Pause || You dwell, hidden, within my heart day and night. Lord; but the poor fools do not understand Your Love. Meeting with the Almighty True Guru, God was revealed to me; I sing His Glorious Praises, and reflect upon His Glories. || 2 || As Gurmukh, I have become enlightened; peace has come, and evil-mindedness has been dispelled from my mind. Understanding the relationship of the individual soul with God, I have found peace, in Your Sat Sangat, Your True Congregation, O Lord. || 3 || Those who are blessed by Your Kind Mercy, meet the Almighty Lord, and find the Guru. Nanak has found the immeasurable, celestial peace; night and day, he remains awake to the Lord, the Master of the Forest of the Universe. || 4 ||"
(SGGS p. 607)

Inderjit Singh played the tabla. Whenever I go to Vancouver Bibi Kulwant Kaur asks me to sing this same *shabad*. Bhai Amrik Singh Ji then sang the following *shabad*: -

"May my emotional attachment, my sense of mine and yours, and my self-conceit be dispelled. || 1 || O Saints, show me such a way, by which my egotism and pride might be eliminated. || 1 || Pause || see the Supreme Lord God in all beings, and I am the dust of all. || 2 || I see God always with me, and the wall of doubt has been shattered. || 3 || The medicine of the *Naam*, and the Immaculate Water of Ambrosial Nectar, are obtained through the Guru's Gate. || 4 || Says Nanak, one who has such pre-ordained destiny inscribed upon his forehead, meets with the Guru, and his diseases are cured. || 5 || 17 || 28 ||" (SGGS p. 616)

The second *Amrit Sanchaar* was in Toronto. The *sewa* of *Panj Piaray* was performed by Bhai Jiwan Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, Bhai Uday Singh, Bhai Iqbal Singh and myself. During *Amrit Sanchaar*, when Bhai Amrik Singh was reciting the *Baani* of Jaap Sahib, I could clearly see two hands on the sword. One was the hand of Bhai Amrik Singh and the other hand was of tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Guru Maharaj Himself was infusing His own positive spirit into the *Amrit*. When Lachhman Singh's wife took her first sip of *Amrit*, she lost consciousness and it took some time for her to recover. Meanwhile her *Naam simran* continued and could be heard. This *Amrit Sanchaar* took place in Bhai Lashman Singh Banga's house and 16 people received *Amrit*.

I requested Bhai Jeevan Singh to come to England and bless the *sangat*. So on his return from Canada to India, Bhai Sahib came to England for a week. He took part in a *Raaen Subaaee*, and the *sangat* was deeply moved by his kirtan. Today Bhai Sahib has long retired from the service of Patna Sahib Gurdwara and now does *sewa* of *kirtan* and *Amrit Sanchaar*.

In this way the Akhand Kirtani Jatha movement spread in America and Canada. Bhai Sahib became very popular in England, America, Canada and Europe. Whenever he arrives in England, the *sangat* enjoys his *kirtan*. In his *Ardaas* he always prays to the Lord, "O Waheguru, let everyone in the world recite Your Name." His wife, Bibi Joginder Kaur, has always supported him in his missionary work.

The Sewa of the Langar at Anandpur Sahib

(*Langar*: The Sikh institution of the non-discriminatory community kitchen)

When I was staying in Chacha Darshan Singh's house, Sant Sewa Singh Ji came there. I was delighted to meet him. It seemed as if we were two friends meeting after a long time. I thought to myself that even in old age Baba Ji was doing such difficult *sewa* and I decided to follow his example. I accompanied Baba Ji from house to house to collect funds for Anandpur Sahib and other Gurdwaras. People contributed generously.

One day Chacha Darshan Singh, Bhai Pakhar Singh, Bhai Mahinder Singh Bains and myself returned after collecting funds and sat down with Baba Ji for our meal. Bibi Mahinder Kaur was serving us and Bibi Surjeet Kaur was making *parshaaday* (chapatis). Baba Sewa Singh Ji enjoyed his meal eating many *parshaaday*. Afterwards he went to wash his hands. While doing this, he asked both ladies which daily *Banis* they recited (*Five Banis*: The Five Banis in the morning are: Japji Sahib; Jaap Sahib; Ten Swayyas; Chaupai; and Anand Sahib (full). (Reharas and Kirtan Sohila are recited in the evening)). Mahinder Kaur replied that she did not know much Punjabi. Surjit Kaur admitted that although she could read Gurbani, she had not memorised any *Bani*. Baba Ji told both of them that there was no shortage in the Guru's house. He told Mahinder Kaur to learn to read Gurbani from her father, Chacha Darshan Singh, and told Surjit Kaur to continue with her effort also. With Guru's blessing, both have since memorised the five daily *Banis* and Sukhmani Sahib.

One Gursikh celebrated his son's birthday by having *Akhand Paatth* read in his house. Giani Amolak Singh, Bhai Shadi Singh, Bhai Bhagirath Singh, Bhai Harcharan Singh, Bhai Mahinder Singh Bains and Bhai Amrik Singh did the *Paatth*. On completion, Giani Amolak Singh Ji performed the *kirtan*. I stayed for three days in their house during the *Akhand Paatth* and was responsible for all of the services. After the completion of *Akhand Paatth* we all got together and decided to give the offerings collected to Baba Sewa Singh Ji on his next trip to England.

Baba Ji came to England a second time. I accompanied him collecting funds. The *sangat* members of England donated generously for Bauli Sahib and for rooms for *sangat* accommodation. Many women donated gold and about two kilograms of gold was collected.

Baba Ji stayed for two or three months. When he was about to return, I gave him the funds collected from *Akhand Paatths*. After some thought, Baba Ji said, "Why don't you start doing the *sewa* of *Akhand paatths*?" I replied, "Baba Ji, I am not a *paatthi* (fluent in reading Gurbani). I cannot do *kirtan*. I do not have any qualificatic for this *sewa*." In those days there were very few *paatthis*. Baba Ji assured me that the Guru Ji Himself would help me with this *sewa* and that I was not to worry about that. With Satguru Ji's blessing, sizeable group of *paatthis* got together, so that, for the duration of one *Akhand Paatth* (about 48 hours), each person got only one turn to do *paatth*. The names of these *paatthis* are worth mentioning because of their unselfish service for others: Bhai Mahinder Singh Gadgaj, Bhai Hardip Singh, Bhai Prithipal Singh, Bhai Joga Singh, Bhai Harbhajan Singh, Bhai Sukhdev Singh, Bibi Kulvinder Kaur, Bibi Charanjit Kaur and many other ladies who used to do *paatth* during the day. I would always stay and enjoy the bliss of *Akhand Paatth* for the three days (Bhai Sahib usually uses the word *daas* (slave or servant) instead of first person "I" in his narrative).



Bhai Rama Singh Ji with accomplished Gurbani readers and singers who performed *Akhand Paatth* (see Glossary) services and donated the Sangat's contributions to the *Langar* (Guru's community kitchen) at Sri Anandpur Sahib.

Bhai Mahinder Singh's children, and Harbhajan Singh would do the *sewa of Gurbani kirtan*. We collected large funds from these *Akhand Paatths*, The *sangat* members chose me to manage the donations. At that time it was a Labour government and one could not send more than a thousand pounds abroad.

With everyone's approval we started the Dashmesh Religious Charitable Trust. Bhai Mahinder Singh Bains was the President, Bhai Harcharan Singh, the General Secretary and Bhai Sukhdev Singh the Treasurer. Bhai Pakhar Singh and Bhai Mahinder Singh Gadgaj were the trustees.

Funds from the *sewa* of these *Akhand Paatths* were given to Baba Ji to buy a large bus at Anandpur Sahib. At that time the cost of the bus was 125,000 rupees. Funds from the *Akhand Paatths* are sent to Anandgarh Gurdwara for the *Langar*. As people heard that Bhai Rama Singh was sending all donations from *Akhand Paatths* for *Langar sewa* at Anandpur Sahib, more people started asking for *Akhand Paatths* in their homes. There was a waiting list of three to four months. Many devotees made their bookings annually in advance. Consequently a trend for *Akhand Paatths* (at home) started. The Guru Himself blessed the continuation of this *sewa*. This *sewa of Akhand Paatths* continued for a long time. At the same time Guru Ji blessed me to travel from country to country doing *Amrit Sanchar*. The *sewa* of organising *Akhand Paatths* was handed over to Bhai Pakhar Singh Ji and it continues with great enthusiasm.



A bus bought from the Sangat's donations during *Akhand Paatth*s in England for Gurdwara Kila Anandgarh Sahib.

When Baba Ji took the gold donations for *sewa*, he left the collection box with us. I took the box to the Gurdwara for collection of funds for the world famous Pingalwarha, an institution at Amritsar for the handicapped, started by Bhagat Puran Singh Ji. On the first day donations of 16 pounds were collected. I handed the box with the money to Bibi Chanan Kaur. She was very happy to take on this *sewa* for the benefit of the needy. She continues to do this service. To collect donations, Bibi Ji sits humbly where people leave their shoes. Some drop a penny, some a few pennies and some a few Pounds. Whatever someone wishes to give is put in the box and good use is made of the money. This Bibi is blessed with compassion. She begs from the sangat, collecting money for orphans. Whenever there is a *Gurpurb* she also collects money for the *Langar* at Anandpur Sahib.

Bhai Jogindar Singh Sandhu went on a *yathra* (see Glossary) to Hazoor Sahib. When he returned, he told me that while there, he had met Sardar Chanan Singh, who informed him about the *vanjaaray*, a people who move about making their living as traders (*vanaj* means trade) and entertainers. These people, perhaps as many as ten million, were interested in embracing the Sikh religion. When they get married, they donate a rupee and a quarter (*sawa rupee*) in Guru Nanak Dev Ji's name as part of the wedding ritual. However, there was no Sikh organisation or facilities for doing *Sikhi parchaar* (i.e. preaching *Sikhi*). Bhai Jogindar Singh encouraged us to start a collection of funds, saying that it would be a great service to help these people learn about *Sikhi* and that we should make an effort to help. He also asked that we give help to a project for building a Gurdwara on the highway from Bombay to Nagpur. I formed a *Kirtani Jatha* with Bhai Harbhajan Singh, Dr Davinder Singh, Bhai Satnam Singh, Bhai Mahinder Singh's children, Bhai Satvinder Singh, Bhai Prithipal Singh and some ladies. We went from house to house performing *kirtan*.

For many years we sent the donations collected for this worthy cause. With Guru Ji's Grace, the Gurdwara was built. A well was also dug and these days *Langar* is served daily. Bhai Jogindar Singh contributed very generously to this project. When Bhai Chanan Singh visited England in 1995, the *sangat* of Southall Gurdwara and the neighbouring areas donated money for the purchase of a jeep.

Sant Baba Sewa Singh Ji came a third time to England to collect funds. Giani Gurdeep Singh at one time had been the Granthi at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall, Havelock Road. He was at that time doing *sewa* as Granthi in America. He learned from Chacha Darshan Singh that Baba Ji was in England. He asked Chacha Ji to request Baba Ji to come to America. He promised to help with fund raising for Baba Ji's *sewa* projects. When Giani Ji did *katha* people from distant places would come to listen to him and were filled with blissful joy when they heard his sermons. He taught many to do correct *paatth*. Baba Ji had a lot of respect for Giani Ji, so he agreed and made plans to go to America. Because Baba Ji spoke no English it was decided that I should accompany him. When we arrived in New York at the Kennedy Airport, Giani Ji and many members of the *sangat* were waiting to welcome us. As we were driving away from the Airport, Baba Ji remarked, "This is the first time in my life I have seen such big cars." Giani Ji replied, "In America petrol is cheap and it is affordable to drive big cars even when there is only one person in a car. America is such a big country that when you travel from one side to the other, you need to change the time on your watch." We stayed at the Gurdwara with Giani Ji for one week. The Sikhs living nearby collected funds for Baba Ji. While we were there Giani Ji, arranged to send Baba Ji to California to Harbajan Singh Khalsa Yogi Ji.

The day we reached there, a *Raaen Subaaee Kirtan* was being held. Yogi Ji used to hold camps every year from late June through August. People came in small groups from all over to take part. They were all wearing white clothes. The most surprising thing for us was that these white Westerners were doing *kirtan* with harmonium and tabla. Baba Ji was very pleased and surprised to see that so many people of Western origin had become Sikhs. There were many people gathered in the *sangat*, the only people of Indian origin being Baba Ji, Joginder Singh, the family of Yogi Bhajan Singh Ji, and myself. There were several thousand American Sikh men and women. Everyone attending was wearing white clothes. The Sikh women were wearing white turbans and their dresses were white. It seemed to me like *Sachkhand*, God's heavenly abode. Everyone closed their eyes and listened to the *kirtan* attentively. All were quietly composed and no one was speaking in this tranquil atmosphere. It appeared as if Guru Gobind Singh Ji's spiritual Light was shining on this land. According to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's injunction that "Rehat, and not the Sikh, is dear to me", all of them earned the true Sikh identity. A *Bibi* (lady) sang the following shabad:

"Guru Ram Das was blessed with the Throne of *raaj yog* (spiritual kingship). First, Guru Nanak illuminated the world, like the full moon, and filled it with bliss. To carry humanity across, He bestowed His Radiance. He blessed Guru Angad with the treasure of spiritual wisdom, and the indescribable Knowledge (of the Ultimate Reality); He overcame the five demons and the fear of the Messenger of Death. The Great and True Guru, Guru Amar Das, has preserved honour in this Dark Age of Kali *Yug*. Seeing His Lotus Feet, sin and evil are destroyed. When His mind was totally satisfied in every way, when He was totally pleased, He bestowed upon Guru Ram Das the Throne of Raja Yoga. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 1399)

Another *Bibi* sang this shabad.

"Serve the Immaculate Lord God, and meditate on the Lord's Name. Join the Society of the Holy Saints, and be absorbed in the Lord's Name. O Lord, glorious and great is service to You; I am so foolish, please, commit me to it. I am Your servant and slave; command me, according to Your Will. As *gurmukh* (see Glossary), I shall serve You, as Guru has instructed me. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 643)

Both of them sang devoutly from their hearts and we felt so much spiritual joy.

The camp was held in a hilly area. On one side was the river and on the other side, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's *Prakaash* (see Glossary) was on a beautiful *palaki* (specially constructed palanquin). For the entire night *shabads* were sung. On completion of the *Raaen Subaaee Kirtan*, Yogi Ji took us home with him. Next day, Yogi Ji took us to a place where Yoga was being taught. There was a big hall where white Americans, both men and women, came to learn Yoga. At that place, Yogi Ji taught these students how to practice *yoga* and recite *Mool Mantar*.

Mool Mantar has the divine power to give peace of mind. Before, many of these students of *Sikhi* used to eat meat and drink alcohol. The practice of yoga and the *paatth* of *Mool Mantar* changed their habits and gave them spiritual tranquillity. Yogi Ji taught them that by adopting the Sikh identity in accordance with Sikh *rehat* (code) they would derive even greater satisfaction. When his students asked about the requirements of *rehat*, he explained that Sikh *rehat* meant that they would have to be *keshadhari* (keep unshorn hair) and take *Amrit*. Any person from any religion can receive *Amrit* and become a Sikh and live according to the *rehat* (inner and outer discipline of *Sikhi*) so dear to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. And so, they prepared themselves and received the gift of *Amrit*.

Yogi Ji said that there also was an *ashram* (yogic school) in Hollywood which he invited us to visit. We flew by plane to Hollywood. Yogi Ji's driver came to receive us from the airport. When we arrived at the *ashram* he took us to see children of white American Singh's in the nursery. All children wore *keski's* (small Sikh *dastars* or turbans) on their heads. The driver told me that everyday these children were taught to recite *Mool Mantar* for five minutes. They were taught to say *Satnam Waheguru* whenever they answered a telephone call. These children were taught about *Sikhi*. None of these children's hair had been cut. They were so staunch in *Sikhi* that they would never waver from the path of *Sikhi* when grown up. Even a rock, when it came under the divine protection of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, softened into wax, as at Panja Sahib; with Guru Ji's blessing Koda Bheel started reciting *Naam* and, Sajan Thug converted into a saintly person. Even Mecca turned around with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's divine look (so that the *kaajis* could understand that Allah was all around us). Baba Ji was very pleased to see the children and said that *rehat* was dear to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji; one who remains true to *rehat* would inherit Khalsa Raj. From there we went to Canada.

Experience of staying with wealthy families has made me realise, that sometimes, perhaps unwittingly, rich people spoil their children. On their birthdays they give them expensive presents like television, VCR, video games etc. The children play and watch television until late in the night. The children do not do their studies well and waste their time playing and watching television. Many children even forget their meals. The children spoil their health by eating chocolates, sweets and drinking Coca-Cola and juice. When the parents are away at work, the children watch useless films and, as a result, have bad dreams. Panjabi children have forgotten their own language and they speak only in English. Many children have started cutting their hair. Nowadays, girls rarely wear *dupatta* (a cloth usually made of fine material for covering the head). The Muslims are doing much better than we are at maintaining tradition. They have opened separate schools for girls. The Muslim girls wear scarves on their heads and do not keep their heads uncovered. Parents need to look after their children. These days drugs are common in schools. Many Sikh children show no respect for anyone.

Our children should learn Panjabi. If they do not know Panjabi and Gurmukhi script, how would they experience *darshan* (holy sight) of Guru Ji, for the Living Guru for the Sikhs is Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji which is written in Gurmukhi. If they cannot read the original Word of the Guru then it will be difficult for them to understand what Guru Ji says (let no Sikh under-rate the importance of the original wording of Gurbani written in Gurmukhi script. As some scholar said about another great religious book, that it could not be translated but only interpreted by individuals, so Gurbani cannot be translated but only interpreted according to the individual linguistic, mental and spiritual attainments of a scholar. The outcome (as indeed this translation of Bhai Rama Singh Ji's experiences), can never be regarded as authentic or complete. The original message, especially of the Guru's Own Authentic Word as recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (accepted by all great scholars as unique in the history of world religions for its authenticity), can only be experienced in the original language and script. Important though translations and interpretations are, the *khaj* (study) of the spiritual message and experience of *Gurbani* must continue in the original language of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. For that reason it is important to recite and pronounce *Gurbani* as written).

I humbly request that parents should look after their children's religious and cultural needs and continue to teach them about *Gursikhi*, the Guru's way.



American Children in full Sikh uniform

Translation from Gurmukhi of letter of 10 October, 1979, from Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President, Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee:

"Dear Sardar Ram Singh Ji,

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa.

Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

Thank you for your undated letter, I am grateful for the information sent in response to our appeal for compiling a directory of Sikh brothers living abroad.

It is a great pleasure to know about your efforts to promote religious projects and the teachings of *Sikhi* in England. Your accounts for Dasmesh Trust have also been received. Our *Ardaas* is that Satguru Ji continues to bless you with affection for and faith in the Guru's House and love for the Panth.

Respectfully,

Concerned for your welfare,

Signed: Gurcharan Singh Tohra.

Sardar Ram Singh Ji 137A Western Road,
Southall, Middlesex, UK."

Yathra to Siri Hemkunt Sahib

(*Yathra*: Pilgrimage, but see Glossary)

Bhai Mohan Singh Bhanvra planned a programme to go to Hemkunt Sahib on 30 May 1978. Eighty-five Sikh men and women took part and the *jatha* (group) included Didar Singh, Surjit Singh Bilga, Bhagat Hari Singh, Bhai Prithipal Singh, Bhai Pakhar Singh, Bibi Channan Kaur, Bibi Balwant Kaur, Bhai Harbhajan Singh Sagoo, Bhai Shadi Singh, Bhai Mohan Singh and many others. First of all we performed an *Akhand Paatth* ceremony. We set off after seeking Guru Ji's blessing. Many Singhs from other towns were at the airport. We were given *siropas* (i.e. honoured - religious *siropa* is usually an orange coloured piece of cloth which is handed over or put around one's neck; on other occasions, a *siropa* may be any token gift) and seen off by Ramgarhia Sabha, Southall Gurdwara (Ramgarhia Sikh denomination relates to certain castes, and is an unfortunate and contradictory development so far as *Sikhi* is concerned). I felt a certain spiritual happiness on meeting so many Gursikhs. Bhai Mohan Singh looked after everyone in the aircraft. We flew by Japan Airlines and reached Delhi airport early next morning.



A leading figure of the Sikh Panth, S. Inderjit Singh Ji, Chairman Punjab and Sindh Bank welcoming the Jatha at Delhi airport.

Ours was the first group from London to go on a *yathra* to Hemkunt Sahib. Bhai Inderjit Singh Ji, Chairman of Punjab and Sindh Bank, Colonel Joginder Singh Maan, Bhai Raghbir Singh Raees, Shamsheer Singh of Kanpur, Baldev Singh, Colonel J P Ramesh Shahi and many other respected gentlemen and ladies came to receive the *jatha*.

They welcomed us by putting flower garlands around our necks. Then we went to a hotel at Kashmiri Gate, Delhi, to spend the night. The hotel owner, Raghbir Singh was a *gurmukh* (one who faithfully follows Guru's teachings) and a very charitable man. He himself undertook the *sewa* of making boarding and lodging arrangements for our group. We stayed in Delhi for two days. During this time, we visited all the historical Gurdwaras of Delhi. Bhai Inderjit Singh, Chairman of Punjab and Sindh Bank, welcomed us at the bank's Janpath branch. Sant Baba Harbans Singh made the arrangements for our *langar* (food) in Bangla Sahib Gurdwara.

On the second day, after eating breakfast in the Chairman's house, we set off for Agra. On the way we visited Gurdwara Guru de Taal, saw the beautiful Taj Mahal and came back in the evening. On the third day we began our journey to Siri Hemkunt Sahib.

The group's first destination was Gurdwara Nirmala Chhavni at Hardwar. Sant Baba Ram Singh Ji Jharu-walay welcomed our group warmly. Another group from Kanpur joined us there and we partook of *langar*. Rishikesh is fifteen miles from Hardwar. Our group set out and soon reached there to the sound of loud *jaikaras* (Sikh cries - see Glossary) by the *sangat*. The *jatha* was warmly welcomed. By that time there were nearly one hundred and fifty Singhs and Singhanis in the *sangat*. Rishikesh is on the banks of the Ganges river. There are many Hindu temples and shrines.

In the evening, a *kirtan* programme was held in the Gurdwara. Bhai Mohan Singh Ji, a *kirtania* (one who does kirtan), along with his old mother came from Bombay. Master Surjit Singh Dardi's *kirtani jatha* had also come from Kanpur. Every *kirtani jatha* took part in turn. Sikh ladies' *jatha* from Thailand did melodious kirtan. The *kirtan* programme lasted well into the night, after which *langar* was served. Sant Sunder Singh Ji had come especially from Kanpur to take charge of the *Langar*. He served the *sangat* with great affection and respect.

The *sangat* enjoyed two days stay at Rishikesh. We left for Sri Nagar on 2 June 1978 (Not to be confused with Sri Nagar, the capital of Kashmir State. Sri Nagar was a hill state during Guru Gobind Singh Ji's time). When we arrived there we were served *langar* and then spent the night there. The next morning, Sukhmani Sahib *Paatth* was recited from five o'clock. Two ancient *Birs* (volumes) of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, from the period of Guru Gobind Singh Ji are kept there. In the evening, the organisers told us that the *Prakaash* (see Glossary) of these *Birs* would be done in the morning for *darshan* by the *sangat*.

After the *kirtan* of Asa di *Var Bani* (A Bani sung at Gurdwaras in the morning to a prescribed popular beat and rhythm called *Tunde Asraajay ki Dhunee*. There are other similar popular beats and rhythms prescribed for singing Gurbani in folk music styles common in the days of Guru Sahibaan), the *sangat* did *darshan* of the two *Birs*, and following *Ardaas*, set off for the next stretch of the journey. The path started rising up, cutting through the mountains. Sri Nagar is at 1500 feet above sea level. As we climbed, we passed by many *paryaags*, where small springs meet and flow together.

After passing Pipal Koti, and Chamoli, we reached Joshimatth Gurdwara. It was quite cold there. After Gurdwara *darshan* we proceeded to Gobind Ghaat. From there the road became very narrow. After the Gurdwara at Gobind Ghaat it becomes necessary to walk the rest of the way. The Gurdwara is about one kilometre from the road. Here the *sewa* of *Nishaan Sahib* (the revered Khalsa Flag seen in front of all Gurdwaras) was undertaken (the *sewa* of Nishaan Sahib includes the changing of the saffron clothing (*Chola Sahib*) covering the flag pole and the Khalsa banner on the top. This is usually done once a year with great religious and Khalsa national fervour).

The *sangat* did *kirtan* while this *sewa* was being done. When the ceremony was complete, two falcons were seen flying in the sky above. They circled around the Nishaan Sahib and then flew towards Hemkunt Sahib. The *sangat* were overjoyed by this omen (for in the Sikh psyche, a falcon is always associated with Guru Gobind Singh Ji). The hill tops resounded to the *jaikaras* of "Bole so Nihaal! Sat Sri Akaal!!" (see *jaikara* in the Glossary).

In the evening after the *paatth* of *Rehraas*, the organisers announced that anyone wanting to receive the blessings of the Guru could take Amrit the following evening, before continuing on to Hemkunt Sahib. Mohan Singh Bhanvra told me that I was to take part in the *Amrit Sanchar*. The others who undertook this *sewa* were: Surjit Singh Gill, Harbhajan Singh Sagghu, Bhai Prithipal Singh, Bhagat Hari Singh, Bhai Mohan Singh, and Bhai Nirmal Singh. Forty Sikh men and women

took Amrit and became *Guru waalay* (*Guru waalay baanay* is a fairly standard expression amongst devoted Sikhs. When a person takes Amrit, that person becomes a *Guru waala*. This means that after taking Amrit, a person's claim to have a Guru cannot be denied, for that person has taken vows to tread the Guru's path and to keep His *rehat*. Weak arguments about an Amritdhari Singh's actual intentions or behaviour, and that what matters is inner *rehat*, are futile excuses for not taking Amrit. You do not point to others to hide your own weaknesses or to deny the importance of taking Amrit in *Sikhi*). It was a sight to see; all the women were wearing *dastaars*.

Gobind Ghaat is a very pleasant and peaceful place. Gurdwara Alak Nanda is on a riverbank. A swinging concrete bridge is next to it. The foot track to Hemkunt Sahib starts after crossing this bridge. Along the side flows the river Hem Ganga that starts at Hemkunt Sahib and then joins Alak Nanda. What a union of purity! This breathtaking sight at Gobind Ghaat is very beautiful. Gobind Ghaat is at an altitude of 6000 feet. The distance between Gobind Ghaat and Gobind Dhaam is 13 kilometres.

As we set off, there was great enthusiasm on every face. Everybody carried a staff in their hands. Everyone uttered the word "Waheguru". Gursikhs meeting on the way, greeted each other with "Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh." There was arrangement for tea and *langar* at many places along the way. The footpath goes along the river Hem Ganga. There are very beautiful scenes to be seen on the way. After trekking for about 11 hours, we finally reached Gobind Dhaam. The main group reached the Gurdwara but Bhai Didar Singh was somewhere behind and had lost the way. It was getting dark. When he came to a junction of footpaths, he did not know which path to follow. He prayed for Satguru Ji's help. Just then, two golden falcons came and started walking in front of him. He felt that this was a *kautak* (see Glossary) and the falcons had come to show him the way. He followed the path shown by the falcons, and then they disappeared. He saw some *sangat* ahead of him and he caught up with them and reached the Gurdwara. At the Gurdwara he recited his unusual experience to the *Sangat*. These days, if anyone loses his way, dogs owned by Gobind Dhaam Gurdwara are sent out to find the person.

A person's tiredness is relieved by doing *sewa*. Bhai Surjit Singh and his wife Kulwant Kaur from Canada, Bhai Pakhar Singh, Bibi Channan Kaur and a few other Sikhs including myself helped with the *langar* preparation. Despite the whole day's steep climb, we were so busy doing *sewa* that we forgot all about our fatigue. While I was doing the *sewa*, a lady came to me and said, "Bhai Sahib Ji, please wake me up in the morning when you do your *simran*" When I heard her, I wondered how she knew that I did *simran* at *Amrit vela*. I was wondering about this when she repeated, "I am going to sleep over there, do not forget to wake me up."

I was concerned. How would I wake her up; I did not even know her name and what would the others think? Next morning, I took the courage to call her, "*Bibi*, it is *Amrit vela*, get up." An inner voice told me, "Good soul, Guru Gobind Singh Ji has come, get up quickly, take your bath and come to Maharaj Ji's room."

While I was doing *simran*, I noticed that the *Bibi* (lady) was bowing down to pay her respects to Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. My eyes closed immediately and a thought passed through my mind that, "She is no other than Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj Himself, who has come to do *simran*. While, doing *simran* I became immersed in a divine musical hum within me. I was so filled with spiritual joy that I felt like continuing to listen to that mystical hum. When I opened my eyes, the lady was not there. I did not know where she had gone. I felt that this was a *kautak* of Maharaj Ji. It is

difficult to describe this experience. I did not even know that woman. Where did she come from and where did she go? She had not even come with our group.

To reach Hemkunt Sahib, one has to climb 1,160 stone stairs. There was snow everywhere. A pathway had been cut through the snow. When we reached the top, a heavenly scene was before us. The peaks of Sapat Snng Mountain were covered with snow. The holy *sarowar* (lake or pool) was covered with snow. Half of the Gurdwara building was also covered with snow. It was impossible to believe my eyes that what I was seeing was real and not a dream! It was a glimpse of heaven on earth. As we went farther, my mind was at peace. In this very spot many saints and sages meditated together for countless years. Here too, in a previous incarnation, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, 'the destroyer of the wicked', spent many years in deep meditation. Akal Purakh persuaded this divine entity to enter the world and take birth in the form of the Tenth Guru. We took a bath on reaching the Gurdwara. All exhaustion disappeared on setting foot in the water. I felt as if I was bathing in an immeasurable and fathomless sea of *Amrit* (Water of immortality). I did not even feel the bitter cold.

The London *sangat* had arranged for an *Akhand Paatth* during our stay. A few other Singhs and I went ahead and started the *Akhand Paatth*. I stayed with them for the entire three days doing *sewa*. Around about one o'clock in the morning, some of us started feeling unwell, suffering perhaps from the effects of altitude i.e. due to low oxygen level. It so happened that those doing *paatth* did not feel any adverse effects. We came out and drank the ambrosial water from the pool and felt a whole lot better. Every *paatthi* (who took his turn to read from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) took a bath before doing *paatth* duty.

After the *Akhand Paatth* was completed, Bhai Malkeet Singh and Bibi Jasminder Kaur did *Asa di Var Kirtan*. Jathedar Sahib (the head of our *jatha*) did the *Ardaas* and we prepared to return, although, I did not feel like leaving Hemkunt Sahib. We reached Gobind Dhaam that night and the very next day we reached Gobind Ghaat.

At Gobind Ghaat there were many other *jathas* on their way to Hemkunt Sahib. The secretary announced that if anyone had not been blessed with the *darshan* (holy sight) of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, to say a prayer to Maharaj Ji, bow and look at the Khanda (Sikh insignia) on the top of the Nishan Sahib outside. By doing this they would be blessed with Guru Ji's *darshan*. The *sangat* followed these instructions with great *shardha* (meditative devotion) and each soul was blessed by Guru Ji's *darshan*.

The departure *kirtan* programme was held in the evening. Master Surjit Singh Dardi sang the following *shabad*:

"The rivers and streams which separate may sometime be united again. In age after age, that which is sweet, is full of poison; how rare is the Yogi who understands this. That rare person who centres his consciousness on the True Guru, knows intuitively and realises the Lord. Without the Naam, the Name of the Lord, the thoughtless fools wander in doubt, and are mined. Those whose hearts are not touched by devotional worship and the Name of the True Lord, shall weep and wail loudly in the end. Nanak speaks the Truth; through the True Word of the Shabad, those long separated from the Lord, are united once again. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 439)

The *sangat* was deeply moved when listening to this *shabad*. Every person was then presented a *Siropa* i.e. a short length of *daslaar* given to honour them. After leaving Rishikesh, we went for

darshan of Paonta Sahib, about 60 kilometres from Rishikesh. This journey was completed in two hours. The *sangat* recited Chaupai Sahib together all the way. We reached the Gurdwara at noon. The *sangat* enjoyed the bliss of the Gurdwara's *darshan* and partook of food from *Guru's Langar*. From Paonta Sahib, we visited Sarhind and finally reached Anandpur Sahib, where we spent the night. After Anandpur Sahib we visited Amritsar and then returned to England.

Chalda Vaheer (Amrit Parchaar)

(*Chalda Vaheer*: The moving group.)

(The reader would be familiar by now with the key Gurmatt words like *Amrit Parchaar*, *Amrit Sanchaar*, *Akhand Paatth*, *kirtan*, *katha*, *Bani*, *simran* or *Naam simran*. *sewa*. *sangat*. *langar* etc. However, please see Glossary when not sure.)

With Guru Ji's Grace, for five or six years, I performed the *sewa* of *Akhand Paatths* in England. During this time, I also took part in *Amrit Sanchaar* ceremonies, bringing those blessed by the Guru, into the fold of *Sikhi*. After this, our *jatha* (religious group), went for *Amrit Sanchaar* to the neighbouring European countries- We continued performing this *sewa* for three or four years. Later we went further to Australia and the Far East. In 1987, Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji invited us to Canada.

Bhai Rajinder Singh of Dudley went to Holland on business. While he was there, he preached *Sikhi* through *kirtan* and *katha*, and many became eager to partake in *Amrit Sanchaar*. Many Singhs of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha used to accompany Bhai Rajinder Singh to perform *kirtan*. Bhai Rajinder Singh was unable to find five *Amritdhari* Singhs in Holland, so he invited five Singhs from England and arranged an *Amrit Sanchaar* in Holland. Bhai Sucha Singh and many others were initiated into *Sikhi*. The Holland *sangat* increased in numbers. With the efforts of Bhai Rajinder Singh Ji, a Gurdwara was built where Singhs could go for *kirtan* programmes. Bhai Kuldip Singh also spread the message of Gurbani and brought many in the fold of *Sikhi*. He travelled widely from England to Norway, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and many other countries- After listening to his *katha* sermons and *kirtan*, many members of the *sangat* prepared themselves to be initiated into *Sikhi*.

Bhai Subeg Singh was doing *sewa* in Australia. Impressed with Bhai Sahib's *katha* and *kirtan* many members of the congregation were ready for initiation but it was difficult to find five *Amritdhari* Singhs qualified for the initiation ceremony of *Amrit Sanchaar*. Bhai Subeg Singh wrote to Bhai Rajinder Singh Ji who spoke to a few Singhs and me about Bhai Subeg Singh's letter. Soon a *jatha* was formed. The members of this group were Bhai Hardial Singh, Bhai Swaran Singh Malhi, Bhai Prithipal Singh, Bhai Rajindar Singh, Bibi Manjeet Kaur of Holland, Bhai Gurbachan Singh of Norway, Bhai Pakhar Singh, Bhai Gurdip Singh and myself. This *jatha* led by Bhai Rajinder Singh Ji, left for Australia. The *jatha* was called "*Chalda Vaheer* Jatha" because it was on the move, going from country to country doing *Sikhi parchaar*, preaching and teaching. The *Chalda Vaheer* movement was originally started in Punjab by Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji.

The *sangat* of Australia gave us a warm welcome when our *Jatha* arrived at Sydney airport. Bhai Subeg Singh had made arrangements for the accommodation of our entire group at the Gurdwara Sahib. The *sangat* was greatly inspired by the sweet and melodious *kirtan* by Bhai Sahib Rajinder Singh Ji in the mornings and evenings. Bhai Raghuji Singh took us to his hometown of Woolgoolga. There we performed the first *Amrit Sanchaar*, and all the members of his family were initiated into *Sikhi*. The next *Amrit Sanchaar* was performed in Sydney. Then we went to Melbourne. After holding *Akhand Paatth* and *Amrit Sanchaar* there, we went to Adelaide. About 250 kilometres from Adelaide, we held another *Akhand Paatth* in a village named Glossop. After the *Akhand Paatth*, *Amrit Sanchaar* was held. Finally we returned to Sydney. With the encouragement of Bhai Subeg Singh and inspired by the *sangat* a *Raaen Subaaee Kirtan* programme was held, and Gurbani *kirtan* was sung throughout the night. We received an invitation from Bhai Jasveer Singh, President of New Zealand Gurdwara asking the *Jatha* to hold an

Amrit Sanchaar programme; many from the *sangat* were ready to receive *Amrit*. (To receive *Amrit* or to take *Amrit*" should be read as taking *Khanday Baatay di Pahul* or *Amrit shakna*, for which see Glossary. This is the initiation ceremony into full Sikhi, the Sikh way of life which includes practising the full approved *Rehat Maryada*, the Sikh Code of Conduct. The word "baptism" has certain western or Christian connotation and has been avoided.)

Our Jatha arrived in New Zealand on 31 December. The *sangat* welcomed us very warmly. There is a beautiful Gurdwara in Auckland. Arrangements were made for the Jatha to stay there. The *sangat* was very impressed to hear Bibi Manjit Kaur's melodious *kirtan* and to see her in *Gursikhi* dress. We held *Amrit Sanchaar*, the first in this country. We met a very devoted lady, Bibi Ranjeet Kaur. She had received *Amrit* initiation from Sri Hazoor Sahib and was a *bibaekee* i.e. one who lived an austere life style according to strict standards of *rehat*. Every day she would pray, "O, True King, be kind to us. Please send your Singhs so that people here can receive *Amrit* initiation. Our Jatha performed the *Amrit Sanchaar* and many Singhs and Singhanis joined the *Sikhi* fold. This lady told us with great affection, "Today, the True King has answered my prayers!" During the *Amrit Sanchaar*, *Raaen Subaaee Kirtan* continued in the main Gurdwara *sangat* hall. When the *Panj Piaray* led the procession of those who had been initiated into the main *sangat* hall, many others were so moved by the spiritual impact, that they too desired *Amrit* initiation.

One lady who was suspected of being under some evil influence also took *Amrit* (Interpretation note: Literal translation of original text would read as "ghost or evil spirit"). The *Panj Piaray* sprinkled *Amrit*, the Water of Immortality, onto the top of her head where her *dasam duar*, the tenth gateway (of inner spiritual consciousness) was located. Immediately, that tormenting influence left her body and she was instantly cured of the problems she had endured. The second *Amrit Sanchaar* programme was held in Hamilton. The Gurdwara there is located in the fields. First a *kirtan* programme was held, followed by *Amrit Sanchaar*. Many were initiated into the *Sikhi* fold.

When we were preparing to leave, the New Zealand *sangat* requested the Jatha to return for an *Amrit Sanchaar* on the Vaisakhi day, the anniversary of the inauguration of the Khalsa Panth. The *sangat* was impressed by the pious lifestyle of the Jatha. The Jatha returned to New Zealand in April. The *sangat* took good care of the Jatha during both visits. All the programmes were held under the supervision and guidance of Bhai Rajinder Singh Ji and Bhai Subeg Singh Ji

Amrit Sanchaar in Singapore

The Naujawan Sabha of Singapore (an organisation of young Sikhs) learnt of the tour of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha from England, to Australia and New Zealand on a mission of *Amrit Sanchaar*. The young Sikhs especially pressed the Jatha to come to Singapore to hold *Amrit Sanchaar* and *kirtan* programmes for the benefit of the *sangat*. We reached Singapore airport at about midnight. Even at that late hour, there were many young Sikhs waiting at the airport to receive the Jatha. They gave us a warm welcome. We reached the Gurdwara Sahib at about one o'clock in the morning. Arrangements for our *langar* had been made. In years past, the Gurdwara in Singapore had been the biggest outside India. The other two important Gurdwaras were at Tehran, and in Thailand.

Arrangement for our accommodation had been made at the Gurdwara. In the early morning at *Amrit vela*, our Jatha performed *Siri Asa Di Var kirtan*. Eventually, *sangat* in other Gurdwaras came to know about the Jatha and asked for *kirtan* programmes. Initially, we were schemed to stay for only three or four days but because of the affection shown by the *sangat* of Singapore, we stayed

for two full weeks. *Raaen Suhaaee* and *Amrit Sanchaar* programmes were held at Dharmak Sabha Gurdwara, and 26 people received Amrit initiation.

Amrit Sanchaar in Malaysia

The *naujawan* (young) Singhs of Malaysia requested the Jatha to come to Malaysia; many individuals were ready to receive *Amrit* there. Accepting their invitation, our Jatha travelled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Our stay was arranged at Gurdwara Tatt Khalsa. The Sangat showered us with lots of affection. Many young Singhs and Singhanis received *Amrit*. The *Sangat* wanted to hold a *Raaen Subaaee kirtan* and it was held with great enthusiasm. A new Gurdwara was to be built in Malaysia. *Sangat* members made a request for the *Jatha* to come to perform the inauguration ceremony.

We agreed, and so Five Singhs laid the foundation stone of the new Gurdwara. Sikh Naujawan Sabha of Malaysia, a society of youth, printed and distributed Gurbani *gutkas*, prayer books, in both Panjabi and English.

We had plans to stay in Malaysia for only one month but the love and affection of the *sangat* was so strong that our stay was extended to two months. With Guru Ji's Grace, all the *Amrit Sanchaars* were successful. Such was the influence of the *Naam* and *Bani*, (Waheguru's Name and His Word) that it changed the lives of many people completely. They were ready for initiation into *Sikhi* and requested that the Jatha should return for another *Amrit Sanchaar* during Vaisakhi.

Our Jatha returned to England in February. Two months later the Jatha left again on another *Parchaar* tour of Sydney (Australia), New Zealand, Fiji, Singapore and Malaysia. At every destination, Guru Ji blessed us with very successful *Amrit Sanchaar* programmes. This time there were even more candidates wishing to receive *Amrit*, especially in Fiji. A Fijian lady had been praying to Guru Ji to send His *Panj Piaray* so that she could receive *Amrit*. It took 12 years for her prayers to be answered. In Fiji 86 people were initiated into *Sikhi*. This lady experienced spiritual ecstasy during the Amrit ceremony.

There are three Gurdwaras in Fiji. Our Jatha held *Amrit Sanchaar* ceremonies in each of them. From there we travelled to the Philippines where there is a Gurdwara built in 1905 by the first Sikh immigrants. In this Gurdwara, a Singh who was married to a local Filipino lady, received Amrit with his family. The family was blessed and their spirits rose very high. During the ceremony, when one of the *Panj Piaray* poured *Amrit* into the lady's mouth, she lost consciousness. The good deeds of her past life were rewarded and she automatically started doing *swas-swas simran* (see Glossary). She was surprised to discover the power of *Amrit*. From Philippines we returned to England.

Amrit Sanchaar in America

Dr. Jaspal Singh of America wrote to Bhai Rajinder Singh that some of them were ready to receive Amrit and asked for an *Amrit sanchaar* to be held there. Accordingly, Bhai Sahib Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji, Bhai Rajinder Singh and myself joined the programme. Two *Amritdhari* Singhs were available there and two more joined us from California. This *Amrit Sanchar* programme was held in Florida, where many people became *Amritdhari*. Among them were the doctor and his family. He had an eight or nine month old son. Sometimes, when a saintly soul takes birth in a family, then the whole family's outlook changes. This happened with this family. When this baby arrived, the parents were inspired towards *Sikhi* and made up their minds to partake of *Amrit*.

On the completion of the *Amrit Sanchaar*, the *sangat* joins in five loud *Jaikaras* (uplifting cries - see Glossary). When the fifth *Jaikara* was called out, this child enthusiastically shouted the *Jaikara* so loudly that the *sangat* was pleasantly surprised. This child had an unusual habit. He would go happily to any Singh, but would start crying if any person, whose hair had been cut, come near him. When the child was given drops of Amrit to drink, he spontaneously began doing *swas-swas simran* (see Glossary). A child's soul is very pure. It does not have any feelings of enmity or discrimination. Very young children are devoid of the five elements of evil. Because of the spiritual wealth of this child's previous life, his parents' lives also changed for the better.

After this *Amrit Sanchaar* we went to California. There is a beautiful Gurdwara built in the middle of some fields. Surrounding the Gurdwara are beautiful fruit orchards. Sixteen individuals were initiated into *Sikhi* in this *Amrit sanchaar*. Wherever an *Amrit sanchaar* took place, the women adorned themselves with *dastars* (Sikh turbans; the smaller turban, usually worn by women, is called a *keski*.)

Once while on a *parchaar* (preaching) tour, we arrived at a Gurdwara in Hollywood. There was a big *sangat* and *katha* sermon was held after *Rehras Sahib paatth*. The *kathakar* (preacher) had recently arrived from India. While doing *katha*, his eyes fell on some white American Singhanis and he commented, "Times have changed. Nowadays, even ladies have started wearing big turbans like men!"

There were quite a number of white (non-Panjabi) American Singhanis who were dressed in the traditional attire of *Amritdhari* Gursikhs i.e. full *cholla* (full length dress), pyjama like leggings, and a *dastar*. The Giani was probably under the impression that light complexioned westerners did not understand Punjabi and so he could speak as he pleased. He made more comments against ladies wearing *dastar*.

Bhai Jagdish Singh, originally from India, is married to a white American Singhani. Her name is Jagjeet Kaur. Jagdish Singh has taught her Punjabi and she has learned *kirtan* very well. She takes part during *Akhand Paatths* and sings *kirtan* with utmost devotion. She was sitting in this particular *sangat* and was pained when she heard Giani Ji's comments. After the *Diwan* (*kirtan/katha*) programme, she went to see Giani Ji and asked him, "Giani Ji, can you please tell me, what is most precious to Guru Gobind Singh Ji?" The Giani was surprised to discover that this white lady knew Panjabi. He replied, "Guru Gobind Singh loves the *rehat* of a Sikh the most."

Jagjeet Kaur then asked, "Could you tell me, which is the *Rehat* that Guru Ji loves the most?" Giani Ji answered, "The one that you are keeping. That is the one Guru Gobind Singh Ji loves the most."

Jagjeet Kaur pressed her point saying, "Then why did you doubt your Guru and speak against the *keski*? Would you rather please people, than make our Guru happy?"

Giani Ji replied remorsefully, "Please forgive me. I was mistaken." Then added sincerely, "From now onwards, I shall preach the complete *Rehat Maryada* of Guru Gobind Singh Ji."

Jivan Jugti

(*Jivan jugti*: Life method for achieving the main objective of life.)

Human life gets shorter with every breath. This realisation comes only when the end is near. The time that has passed is not going to come back. So, we should make full use of whatever time we have left. It is very important to have a direct Guru-Sikh spiritual relationship i.e. to become *Guru waalay* Sikh. This is only possible if a Sikh's commitment to the Guru is whole-hearted through the acceptance of *Khanday Baatay di Pahul* i.e. *Amrit*.

"The Lord created the Throne of Truth, which rests in the *Sat Sangat*, the Holy Congregation. O Nanak, the Lord is Fearless and Formless; all play in the Power of God. Remembering the Guru, we conquer death. Now is the time to take up the sword! Drink in the Amrit strengthened by the Sword, And your life shall be renewed. The Khalsa make up the Guru's Congregation. The self-willed *manmukhs* are miserable. Waaho! Waaho! Hail! Hail! Unto Guru Gobind Singh! He is the Guru, and He Himself is the Disciple. (Bhai Gurdas: *Vaar* 41.1)

"After taking your cleansing bath, remember your God in meditation, and your mind and body shall be free of disease. Millions of obstacles are removed, in the Sanctuary of God, and good fortune dawns. || 1 || The Word of God's Bani, and His Shabad, are the best utterances. So constantly sing them, listen to them, and read them, O brothers, and the Perfect Guru shall save you. || Pause || The glorious greatness of the True Lord is immeasurable; the Merciful Lord is the Lover of His devotees. He has preserved the honour of His Saints; from the very beginning of time, His Nature is to cherish them. || 2 || So eat the Ambrosial Name of the Lord as your food; put it into your mouth at all times. The pains of old age and death shall all depart, when you constantly sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord of the Universe. || 3 || My Lord and Master has heard my prayer, and all my affairs have been resolved. The glorious greatness of Guru Nanak is manifest, throughout all the ages. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 611)

We should not be lax in doing *simran*. We should get up at *Amrit vela* i.e. early in the morning, before sunrise, and amass this true wealth of *Naam* and make good use of every life breath. Just as we require money to travel from one country to another, so we need this true wealth of *Naam* to go to *Dargah* i.e. God's country. How can this wealth be accumulated? There is only one way to do it: when a New Year starts, one should resolve to bring a positive change in one's life. Every person should resolve to do at least one *Sehaj Paatth* each year. A *Sehaj Paatth* is *Paatth* of the whole Guru Granth Sahib Ji done at one's own pace and over a period of time i.e. a few pages are read at a time. Every one should also recite *Mool Mantar*, the Basic Precept, 125,000 times each year. If one can do more than this, so much the better. If someone is unable to read, then that person should ask another who can do the *paatth*, but should listen to it with complete attention. This is the only way for a person to get the benefit of *Sehaj Paatth*.

Satguru Ji blessed Bhai Prithipal Singh Ji with such an opportunity. Bhai Sahib and I decided to usher in the New Year with a worthwhile resolution. Every year, on the eve of 31 December, a *kirtan* programme is held in Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall. It lasts till midnight and then there is an *Ardaas* for the New Year. On this occasion, after the *Ardaas*, we went to Prithipal Singh's house and started a *Sehaj Paatth* and *simran* programme. Bhai Sahib did the *Paatth* and I did *simran*.

Every day we would start the *Paath* and *simran* at 1 a.m. Bhai Sahib would do the *Paath* with great devotion and every line of *Gurbani* could be understood clearly and we enjoyed the *paatth*. The mind became tranquil when the *Paatth* and *simran* started and we experienced divine *ras* or ambrosial taste. As Satguru Ji says,: -

"Come, O beloved Sikhs of the True Guru, and sing the True Word of His Bani. Sing the Guru's Bani, the supreme Word of Words. Those who are blessed by the Lord's Glance of Grace — their hearts are imbued with this Bani. Drink in this Ambrosial Nectar, and remain in the Lord's Love forever; meditate on the Lord, the Sustainer of the world. Says Nanak, sing this True Bani forever. || 23 ||"
(Anand Sahib: SGGS p. 920)

Each year, we completed the *Sehaj Paatth* during Easter holidays.

Charitable Acts

There are many people who do kind things for others but it has been observed that most people do it for their own egoistic reasons. They want people to praise their actions and say that they are very generous. Some people give donations in the Gurdwara and insist that their names be announced in the *Ardaas*.

To donate for the benefit of others is the highest charitable acts; for instance to help the needy with gifts of money, to pay for the marriage expenditure of a poor person's daughter, and giving to other charities and doing good deeds. Some people help others by using their own hands for doing *sewa* (unselfish service).

Chacha Darshan Singh was sick and I went to see him in the hospital. While I was sitting there two white men came and started massaging his feet. Chacha Ji thought of giving them some money. They refused to take any money and said, "We do this free of charge; just please remember us in your prayers to God". I was very pleased to see that they did not have any prejudice in their hearts. They were only looking for God's blessing. That was a true unselfish charitable act.

Once I went with the Jatha to Koln, Germany for the purpose *Amrit Sanchaar*. The *sangat* there rented a hall every Sunday for their prayer meetings, which was very expensive. I spoke to the main organiser and asked him to look for some land on which to build a Gurdwara. He said, "Bhai Sahib Ji, there are many places available but money is needed." I assured him that the *sangat* of England would help.

Later, when the Gurdwara was built, we went there again for *Amrit parchaar* (i.e. for preaching the spiritual need of taking Amrit) and I noticed that the *Palki* on which Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji rested, was very small in size. I told them that we would get a new *Palki* made. When I returned from Germany, I mentioned this to Bhai Gursharan Singh. He promised to talk to Bhai Jagtar Singh and Bhai Avtar Singh, the owners of a wood working shop.

The next day, Avtar Singh and Jagtar Singh came to me and expressed their eagerness to help. They said enthusiastically, "It is our good luck that we are getting an opportunity to make the Throne (palanquin) on which Maharaj Ji will sit." They added, "Whatever material is required we will supply free of charge. One of our shops is vacant at the moment. The *Palki* can be made there." Then I spoke to a carpenter, Bhai Ratan Singh. He discussed this project with his fellow carpenters, Bhai Phuman Singh and Bhai Ajit Singh. They were also very delighted to help. Bhai Hardev Singh took the responsibility of transporting the materials from one shop to another.

When the *Palki Sahib* was ready, I asked Bhai Jarnail Singh to transport it to Germany. He and his Singhani, Bibi Gurmail Kaur, borrowed a van from Bhai Jarnail Singh of Leicester, and transported the *Palki* to Germany. Next week, Bhai Hardev Singh and I went to Germany with the carpenters, to complete the work and assemble the *Palki* in the Gurdwara. This *sewa* was done without desire for any reward. Everyone was happy to take part. No one was hoping for anything in return. Satguru Ji knows what is in each person's heart. Whoever does *sewa* without telling others, is rewarded many times over by Satguru Ji.

The greatest charitable deeds were done by Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji sacrificed his life in order to save another religion, at the time, the Hindu religion. He had no desire for praise. It was a pure act of selfless service to save another religion. The people of India have forgotten Satguru Ji's great sacrifice. Now even the people of Punjab are beginning to forget Guru Ji's act of charity. Guru Ji's injunction is: partake of Amrit, do honest work, recite Name and do acts of charity.

PART 3 - SEWA

Selfless service with humility

SEWA - The Gurmatt tradition of selfless service

"One whose heart is mercifully blessed with abiding humility, O Nanak, is liberated here, and obtains peace hereafter" (Sukhmani Sahib 12.1 SGGS p. 278)

Performance of *sewa* (selfless service) makes the mind humble. It generates humility. For this reason, whenever you go to the Gurdwara, start by doing the *sewa* of cleaning the *Sangat's* shoes.

"Egotism is opposed to the Name of the Lord; the two do not dwell in the same place. In egotism, selfless service cannot be performed, and so the mind goes unfulfilled." (SGGS p. 560)

"Service to the True Guru is fruitful and rewarding, if one performs it with one's mind focused on it. The fruits of the mind's desires are obtained, and egotism departs from within. His bonds are broken, and he is liberated; he remains absorbed in the True Lord. It is so difficult to obtain the Naam in this world; it comes to dwell in the mind of the Gurmukh. O Nanak, I am a sacrifice to one who serves his True Guru."
(SGGS p. 644)

Sewa is done in many different ways. Guru Arjan Dev Ji started the *sewa* of cleaning *Sangat's* shoes in the Gurdwara. When 700 Sikhs arrived from Kabul, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, personally ground wheat grain on a *chakki* to produce flour (Until the middle of the 20th Century, every household in Punjab had a *chakki* at home. Two circular grindstones were used to grind grain to flour for making *rotis*. The lower stone was fixed in a circular earthen hold and the second placed on the top for circular motion by hand). He asked Mata Ganga Ji to prepare food while reading the Gurbani of *Jap Ji Sahib* ("Note: The Guru's wife is addressed with respect as *Mata* meaning "Mother"). The *Sangat* of Kabul stayed at a place now called Piplee Sahib. As ordinary *sewadars* (those who serve), Guru Ji served the *langar* (food) to the *Sangat* (Holy Congregation) while Mata Ji did the *sewa* of the *pakha* (A traditional large fan also called *pakha* held with both hands and swung gently from side side to produce a cooling draught in hot weather). The *Sangat* went to Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) for Guru Ji's *darshan* (i.e. spiritual experience of seeing Guru Ji). As is the Sikh tradition, shoes are taken off at the entrance before going into Darbar Sahib. The *jathedar* (group leader) of the Kabul *Sangat* asked for three or four volunteers to look after the shoes so that the others could go inside; but no one was prepared for this humble task. All were keen and excited to be the first to experience Guru Ji's holy *darshan*. They rushed in, leaving the leader behind. Guru Ji, being aware of the situation, approached the *jathedar* without revealing his identity, and offered to look after the shoes.

When the *Sangat* went inside the Darbar Sahib, they found the Guru Ji's *singhasan* ("throne" i.e. the Guru's seat facing the *Sangat*) empty. The *jathedar* of the Kabul *Sangat*, seeing the revered Baba Budha Ji arrive, asked, "Baba Ji where is Guru Ji?"; little realising that he had left Guru Ji outside, looking after the *Sangat's* shoes! Baba Budha Ji went to the entrance and saw Guru Ji doing the *sewa* of cleaning the *Sangat's* shoes. Guru Ji was cleaning the shoes in humility and saying the following *shabad* (hymn) from Guru Granth Sahib:

"The True Guru meditates on the Lord, the Primal Being. The *Sat Sangat* (the True Congregation) loves the True Guru. Those who join the *Sat Sangat*, and serve the True Guru, the Guru unites them in the Lord's union. This world, this universe, is a terrifying ocean. On the Ship of the *Naam* (the Name of the Lord), the Guru carries us across. The Sikhs of the Guru accept and obey the

Lord's Will; the Perfect Guru carries them across. O Lord, bless me with the dust of the feet of the Guru's Sikhs, that I a sinner may also be saved. Those who have such pre-ordained destiny written upon their foreheads by the Lord God, come to meet Guru Nanak. The Messenger of Death is beaten and driven away; we are saved in the Court of the Lord. Blessed and celebrated are the Sikhs of the Guru; in His Pleasure, the Lord unites them in His Union.
(SGGS p. 1424)

Baba Budha Ji returned to the *Sangat* and said that Guru Ji was doing *sewa* of the *Sangat's* shoes. The whole *Sangat* apologised to Guru Ji and asked for forgiveness.

This *sewa* requires total humility and for that reason, is the most difficult; few are prepared to do it because most people suffer from a sense of false pride. The spiritual satisfaction of this *sewa* is therefore the greatest. If any individual does *sewa* in humility then the beneficial effect is felt sooner. The *sewa* of cleaning *Sangat's* shoes is of the highest order because this can only be done with humility. Ordinary people think that this is the lowest form of *sewa* and it is not popular. People wonder what would others think if they were seen cleaning shoes. Some mistakenly think that those cleaning shoes were perhaps being punished by the *Panj Piaray* for breaking some rules of the *Rehat* (the Khalsa code of conduct) and for that reason they do not do this type of *sewa*. But such *sewa* washes the dirt of sins from the mind.

"If you take even one step towards the Guru, He will take millions of steps to welcome you."
(Bhai Gurdas Kabit 111)

If you walk to the Gurdwara then each step goes to your spiritual credit and your feet are blessed. When going to the Gurdwara one should do Waheguru *simran* or repeat the *Mool Mantar* (Basic Precept). If *paatth* is done with concentration then one remains content and positive. A bird has two wings and cannot fly without these. In the same way, for the Gursikhs *sewa* and *simran* are like two wings. Without *sewa* and *simran* an individual will not rise above the problems of daily life and remain content and positive. By doing *sewa*, the hands, feet and the whole human body become purified. By doing *simran* the tongue and the mind are purified.

"The *Naam* is a Priceless Jewel; it is with the Perfect True Guru. When one is enjoined to serve the True Guru, He brings out this Jewel and bestows this enlightenment. Blessed, and most fortunate of the very fortunate, are those who come to meet the Guru."
(SGGS p. 40)

"My doubt and fear have been taken away, and I have been made pure, since my ego was conquered."
(SGGS p. 207)

"But if the ego is lost (by the soul-bride), then she merges in her Husband Lord. Only then can the soul-bride obtain the nine treasures of her Beloved."
(SGGS p. 750) (These nine treasures are mentioned in Sanskrit (Vedic) literature e.g. the Purans and relate to certain worldly treasures e.g. wealth, children; or qualities and talents like literary, musical or martial skills etc)

This episode is known to all that Guru Amar Das Ji (before his Guruship) did *sewa* for twelve years, but Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji never praised him for doing *sewa* with such great devotion. Guru Ji was all knowing and realised that if praised, Amar Das Ji may not remain qualified for Guruship. Guru

Angad Dev Ji realised that Amar Das Ji would never deviate from his chosen path. The latter passed the test set by the Guru. When Amar Das Ji had acquired complete purity of spirit, Guru Ji caused a *kautak* (an unusual event) to take place. On one dark stormy night, Amar Das Ji was returning from River Bias carrying water. On the way he fell in a cloth weaver's hole in the ground. On hearing the sound, the weaver asked who could be out there in that dark stormy night. His wife replied, "Who else, but Amru the one without shelter!". Amar Das Ji replied; "Foolish woman, I am not without shelter, I belong to the Guru." Hearing this, such was the impact of this simple reaction (from a purified soul) that the weaver's wife became mentally sick. (She was cured when she and her husband begged for forgiveness from Guru Ji).

Some Sikhs begin to feel proud after doing *sewa* for a few days. They are very pleased to hear praise from others. Some Sikhs never give up their pride even after doing *sewa* for a lifetime. They cannot achieve their life objective. When someone praises you and says that you are doing great *sewa*, then pray to Waheguru to save you from *haumai* (arrogance or pride).

Praise be to Guru Maharaj, that He continues to save me, His servant, from *haumai*. No one knows how much *sewa* and *simran* I do and at what time I sleep or at what time I get up; all this I have kept to myself. When someone praises me then my head bows in humility at the Guru's holy feet. The inner voice of my spirit says, "O Lord! This praise is not of Your servant; it is Your praise; it is praise of Your *Naam*, (Name) not mine."

There is a way to know that one has been saved from *haumai* (pride or conceit) and that is to do a secret prayer in the mind. At that time you will feel humble due to an inner awareness of your own insignificance. If your eyes become tearful (with humility), you will realise that you have been saved from *haumai*. Some individuals do not shun *haumai* and crave for loud praise.

"Egotism is opposed to the Name of the Lord; the two do not dwell in the same place. In egotism, selfless service cannot be performed, and so the mind goes unfulfilled."
(SGGS p. 560)

There are many who make dedicated effort but do not achieve any success because they remain drowned in *haumai*.

One devotee had a great desire to take *ishnaan* (holy bath) in the *Sarovar* (sacred pool next to any Gurdwara, but in this case at Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar). He prayed that if his deformed feet were cured, he would attend Darbar Sahib to take *ishnaan* once every month. His prayer was answered. With whatever desire a sincere prayer is said, that desire is fulfilled. Whatever illness one has is cured. For this reason it is important to have total faith in the Guru.

In Sri Harmandar Sahib, *sewa* starts at one o'clock in the morning. Many devotees have been doing *sewa* for many years. Some devotees do *sewa* of sweeping the premises on all days, without break. One devotee had been doing the *sewa* of sweeping the floor for over 15 years. One day Guru Ram Das Ji cast his benevolent look on this devotee and wanted to bestow on him the precious gift of Waheguru's *Naam simran*, but before doing so, He wanted to test the Sikh's readiness. When he was doing the *sewa* of sweeping, Guru Ji started walking alongside, disguising his own identity as the Guru. The Gursikh had collected the litter in a heap. Guru Ji intentionally disturbed the heap and scattered the litter. The Sikh *sewadar* saw that the place was littered again. He was furious and said, "Whoever comes for *darshan* (holy sight of Darbar Sahib and Guru Ji), walks like a blind person; I have been collecting the litter since morning and you have scattered

it again." Hearing these words, Guru Ji gave *darshan* in his true form and disappeared. The devotee's heart was filled with great sorrow and he started regretting his harsh words. He thought, "My many years of dedicated effort has been wasted". He started praying to Guru Ji, admitting his mistake and asking for forgiveness.

This servant requests that whosoever does *sewa* should do so humbly without showing arrogance. Guru Ji is all knowing. He wanted to enlighten this Sikh, that *sewa* should be done in humility. Guru Ji gave *darshan* to this Sikh for this same reason that he should become wise; he should do *sewa* in humility by giving up pride and only then would *sewa* be fruitful.

One day after the conclusion of the evening *diwan* (Gurbani singing and prayers), the *Sangat* (holy congregation) was taking the Guru Granth Sahib Ji in ceremonial procession to Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. One Sikh hid on the upper floor of Sri Harmandar Sahib. He became greedy and wanted to steal the gold plates from Sri Harmandar Sahib. As he started to steal, the Guru appeared in the form of a Gursikh and said. "Do not do this bad deed; there is great power here." The sikh ignored this warning and said "Go away! Guru Ram Das Ji is not keeping watch here. Just keep quiet and I will give you some gold also." When the Sikh did not refrain from doing this deed, by the Guru's Will he fell down and broke his leg. Then he started crying out to the Guru to forgive him knowing that he had strayed from the right path. By then the watchman arrived and asked what had happened to the man. Many Sikhs from the *sangat* came also. He confessed that he became greedy and started to steal the gold plates. He then realised that Sri Guru Ram Das Ji was ever present at every place.

The Sewa of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

"Sewa of the True Guru bears fruit only if done with total devotion."
(SGGS p. 552)

The *sewa* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is meritorious only if a person is doing it with the understanding, that Guru Ji, when kept at home, is ever present like a living Being. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji must be regarded as the Living Light. We should regard it in the same way as we would regard a living Guru sitting in front of us. The Gursikh who serves Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is most fortunate.

"Kabir, those mortals who consume marijuana, fish and wine, no matter what pilgrimages, fasts and rituals they follow, they will all go to hell." (SGGS p. 1377)

Bhagat Kabir Ji says in this *shabad* that the *sewa* is fruitless if done by those who eat meat and drink alcohol. The *sewa* of such people is wasted. Pilgrimages and fasts of such people are not successful. The sacred spirits of Gursikh martyrs (*shaheeds*) guard the place where there is *Prakaash* (see Glossary) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If *sewa* is not done properly and respectfully, then the family begins to suffer from pain and hardship. Waheguru's *sewa* should be done with great affection. Daily the *Prashaad* or *Degh* (holy sweet sacrament) should be prepared and offered for blessing of Guru Ji. To seek such blessing daily permeates everything with a positive spirit. Guru Ji's white sheets should be changed every week. They should be washed properly and ironed. The room should be cleaned thoroughly. *Rumalas* (coloured and decorative covering pieces of cloth) should be ironed every week. If Guru Ji's *sewa* is to be done at home, then as a matter of principle, the morning *Prakaash* ceremony must be adhered to. In the evening between six to seven o'clock, after reciting *Rehras* and *Kirtan Sohila*, the closing ceremony of Guru Granth Sahib (*Sukh-aasan* - see Glossary) must be performed and Guru Ji placed in a resting position.

Some devotees keep Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji at home, but do not do the *sewa* properly. If guests arrive, often in idol chatter, Guru Granth Sahib Ji's *sewa* is forgotten. The *sewa* of Guru Ji must be done at the right time. If someone is visiting then one person can attend to the guest while another can do Guru Ji's *sewa*. Children should also be trained in how to do *Prakaash* in the morning, and *Sukh-aasan* in the evening. In the morning all the family should take part in doing *Nit-nem* (daily prayers) and then start the day's chores. In the evening the whole family should join in to do the *Paatth* of *Rehras*. Children should always sit with their parents, it has been seen in many houses that while the parents go upstairs to do *paatth*, the children sit downstairs watching television. The children should also be encouraged to acquire the habit of reciting *Gurbani*. It is the parents' duty to instil the virtue of *Sikhi* into their children, how else are they to learn?

When I was living in Indonesia, the President of India came for a visit. I had a great desire to meet him. It is very difficult for an ordinary person like myself to meet a famous person. A poor person just cannot meet such people. An Indonesian senior official and my boss asked me to help in the arrangements for the President. I was delighted for this opportunity to stay near the President. I was very keen for one or two days, but after that, I soon realised that the President was just an ordinary person. Slowly, my respect for him decreased. When I used to enter his residence, important businessmen would plead with me to get his autograph. Those who did not know the President closely, they had a great desire to meet him; I was close to him and I had lost any such desire.

For this same reason, we place less value on what is available to us. For example, we value our limbs only when they stop working. Only when one has no eyes does one realise the value of eyes. In the same way, it has been noticed that some people do not understand the status of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

"The Master's Name is priceless; no one knows its value. Those who have good destiny recorded on their foreheads, O Nanak, enjoy the Love of the Lord." (SGGS p. 81)

Some have limited knowledge and regard Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as an ordinary book only, not the real Guru. They see others bow but with no reverence. Those Gursikh who are fully aware that Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the perfect True Guru, offer their bodies, minds and wealth to the Guru when bowing in deep reverence. When they bow their heads before the True Guru in all sincerity, their sins of many previous life cycles are washed away. Those individuals who achieved the precious gift of *Sikhi* (Sikh faith - Sikhism is a westernised and less correct word to describe the Sikh way of life as a complete whole life system) through great effort, only they have true realisation of the greatness of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

People of other religions carried out research and realised, that in this dark age of ***Kalyug*** (see Glossary), only Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the perfect Guru and they took ***Amrit*** to become the Guru's Sikhs. In the same way, people in the West became Sikhs. They sacrificed everything in order to gain Guru Ji's blessing and sought refuge with the Guru. White ***Singhs*** and ***Singhanis*** (male and female Gursikhs) all live according to Gursikh ***Maryada*** (Code of conduct). We should learn something from them, for they are destined to make a great contribution to the establishment of Khalsa Raj.

Simran

(Meditative repetition of Waheguru's Name)

"On the day of the new moon, my soul is at peace; the Divine Guru has blessed me with contentment. My mind and body are cooled and soothed, in intuitive peace and poise; I have dedicated myself to serving God. One who meditates in remembrance on the Name of the Lord, his bonds are broken, all his sins are erased, and his works are brought to perfect fruition; his evil-mindedness disappears, and his ego is subdued. Taking to the Sanctuary of the Supreme Lord God, his comings and goings in reincarnation are ended. He saves himself, along with his family, chanting the Praises of God, the Lord of the Universe. I serve the Lord, and I chant the Name of God. From the Perfect Guru, Nanak has obtained peace and comfortable ease.

(SGGS p. 299)

"Now, the Dark Age of Kalyug has come. Plant the *Naam* (the Name of the One Lord). It is not the season to plant other seeds. Do not wander lost in doubt and delusion. One who has such destiny written on his forehead, shall meet with the Guru and find the Lord. O mortal, this is the season of the *Naam*. Nanak utters the Glorious Praises of the Lord. (SGGS p. 1185)

"Remembering God, one does not have to enter into the womb again. Remembering God, the pain of death is dispelled. Remembering God, death is eliminated. Remembering God, one's enemies are repelled. Remembering God, no obstacles are met. Remembering God, one remains awake and aware, night and day. Remembering God, one is not touched by fear. Remembering God, one does not suffer sorrow." (Sukhmani Sahib 1.2 SGGS p. 262)

By doing Waheguru *simran* a human being is freed from the cycle of birth and death; achieves contentment; and is freed from all types of fear. About those who do not practise *simran*. Guru Arjan Dev Ji says:

Without meditating in remembrance on the Lord, one's life is like that of a snake. This is how the faithless cynic lives, forgetting the Naam, the Name of the Lord. || 1 || One who lives in meditative remembrance, even for an instant, lives for hundreds of thousands and millions of days, and becomes stable forever. || 1 || Pause || Without meditating in remembrance on the Lord, one's actions and works are cursed. Like the crow's beak, he dwells in manure. || 2 || Without meditating in remembrance on the Lord, one acts like a dog. The faithless cynic is nameless, like the prostitute's son. || 3 || Without meditating in remembrance on the Lord, one is like a horned ram. The faithless cynic barks out his lies, and his face is blackened. || 4 || Without meditating in remembrance on the Lord, one is like a donkey. The faithless cynic wanders around in polluted places. || 5 || Without meditating in remembrance on the Lord, one is like a mad dog. The greedy, faithless cynic falls into entanglements. || 6 || Without meditating in remembrance on the Lord, he murders his own soul. The faithless cynic is wretched, without family or social standing. (SGGS p. 239)

If a person is seeking salvation then it is very important for that person to receive *Amrit* initiation. Every person should search for salvation.

"This human body is so difficult to obtain; it is only obtained by great good fortune. Those who do not meditate on the Naam, the Name of the Lord, are murderers of the soul. || 1 || Those who forget the Lord might just as well die. Without the Naam, of what use are their lives? || 1 || Pause

|| Eating, drinking, playing, laughing and showing off — what use are the ostentatious displays of the dead? || 2 || Those who do not listen to the Praises of the Lord of supreme bliss, are worse off than beasts, birds or creeping creatures. || 3 || Says Nanak, the Gur Mantar has been implanted within me; the Name alone is contained within my heart. || 4 || ||" (SGGS p. 188)

"Waheguru is the Guru's *mantar* (mystical formula)" and it may be recited by Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian and, in fact, anyone. All happiness is achieved by its recitation. *Rehat* (*Sikhi Code*) is dear to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji:-

"*Rehat* is dear to me, not the Sikh". (Guru Gobind Singh Ji)

That person is my Sikh who keeps *rehat*.
He is my Master and I his follower.
Without *rehat*, one cannot be called a Sikh.
Without *rehat*, one stumbles from door to door (and suffers hereafter),
Without *rehat*, one is never content.
For these reasons one should remain steadfast in *rehat*.
(*Rehatnama* Bhai Desa Singh Ji)

Amrit should be taken from those *Panj Piaray* (Five Beloved Ones) who follow full *Rehat Maryada* and do simran in the morning with every breath.

"With each and every breath, meditate in remembrance on the Lord of the Universe, and the anxiety within your mind shall depart." (Sukhmani Sahib 24.1 SGGS p. 295)

The True Guru Ji has given equality to men and women. *Rehat Maryada* applies to both equally. The *Panj Piaray* preach *Naam simraan* after conducting the Amrit ceremony.

"O my True Guru, implant within me the Name of the Lord. The Lord is my mother, father, child and relative; I have none other than the Lord, O my mother."
(SGGS p. 996)

Those who do not recite the *Five Banis* (prescribed daily Gurbani recitation), they should not volunteer for the *sewa* of being appointed as *Panj Piaray* (for the purpose of *Amrit Sanchaar* i.e. the *Amrit* initiation ceremony). Those who do such *sewa* have to give away a portion from their own spiritual earnings. One who has not done *simran* in the morning, what can that person give from his or her spiritual earnings (for that person has none); that person can only but suffer a loss. Many people undergo the Amrit ceremony but do not earn spiritual credit by *simran*. Only a few get up in the morning to sing the praises of the Guru.

After the Amrit ceremony, the *Panj Piaray* direct that *Naam* should be recited after taking a bath at *Amrit vela* (early in the morning), and in the manner taught by them. The *Amrit vela* starts at one o' clock in the morning.

"After taking your cleansing bath, remember your God in meditation, and your mind and body shall be free of disease. Millions of obstacles are removed, in the Sanctuary of God, and good fortune dawns. || 1 || The Word of God's Bani, and His Shabad, are the best utterances. So constantly sing them, listen to them, and read them, O siblings of destiny, and the Perfect Guru shall save you. || Pause || The glorious greatness of the True Lord is immeasurable; the Merciful

Lord is the Lover of His devotees. He has preserved the honour of His Saints; from the very beginning of time, His Nature is to cherish them. || 2 || So eat the Ambrosial Name of the Lord as your food; put it into your mouth at all times. The pains of old age and death shall all depart, when you constantly sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord of the Universe. || 3 || My Lord and Master has heard my prayer, and all my affairs have been resolved. The glorious greatness of Guru Nanak is manifest, throughout all the ages. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 611)

There are two methods of Waheguru *simran*: the first is recitation of "Waheguru, Waheguru", and the second is Waheguru *simran* with every *swas* (life breath). Through the first method of Waheguru *simran* one acquires **exceptional mental powers** but it takes a long time to achieve the true objective. However, if Akal Purakh showers His Grace on a person, or if one has done meditation in a previous life, then Waheguru's *simran* flows in rhythm with every *swas* (life breath).

"With each and every breath, meditate in remembrance on the Lord of the Universe, and the anxiety within your mind shall depart." (Sukhmani Sahib 24.1 SGGS p. 295)

The second method of Waheguru *simran* with every breath is taught by the *Panj Piaray* during the Amrit ceremony. They direct that Waheguru *simran* with every breath is very important at *Amrit vela*. *Simran* with every breath means that recitation of Waheguru's Name becomes natural with every breath i.e. "finds a home" in every breath or *swas*. As we breathe twenty-four hours a day, so, as a matter of habit, *Naam simran* continues with every breath. When life comes to an end, the last breath of life (*swas*) inhabited by Waheguru's Naam, on leaving the body, takes the soul to the Plain of Truth, the True Abode of Waheguru Ji. Says Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji:-

"Meditate, meditate, meditate in remembrance of Him, and find peace. Worry and anguish shall be dispelled from your body. Remember in praise the One who pervades the whole Universe. His Name is chanted by countless people, in so many ways. The Vedas, the Puraans and the Simritees, the purest of utterances, were created from the One Word of the Name of the Lord. That one, in whose soul the One Lord dwells, the praises of his glory cannot be recounted.

Those who yearn only for the blessing of Your Darshan, Nanak: save me along with them. || 1 || (Sukhmani Sahib 1.1 SGGS p. 262)

One day, I went to Bhai Sukhdev Singh's house. He took me to the garden. I am also keen on gardening. He said, "Bhai Sahib Ji, I planted two seeds of marrow, both on the same day. One has sprouted and grown quite a bit, but the other one has not even sprouted as yet. What can be the reason for that?"

I replied, "It is possible you did not plant the seed in the right way, let us dig it up and see. When the seed was exposed it had been placed incorrectly and was therefore taking longer to sprout. Just as the seed planted in the right way sprouts faster, so *Naam simran* with every breath settles more quickly in the heart.

Naam simran in *Saadh Sangat* (holy congregation) is much more fruitful than if done alone. "His Glory shines forth in the Holy Congregation of the saints." (Bhai Gurdas *Vaar 3 Pauri 10*)

"He is a companion, a friend, and a beloved of mine, who reflects upon the Lord's Name, in the Company of the Holy. In the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, cross over the world-ocean, and the noose of death shall be cut away." (SGGS p. 108)

If a person sits at home and does *Naam simran*, the fruit of that is like small droplets of rain. If *Naam simran* is in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Ji and in *Saadh Sangat*, then it is as if one is standing in heavy rain, the flood of which sweeps away everything; in that same way the sins of previous lives of an individual are washed away.

With some individuals, *Raam-Naam* (Waheguru's Name) finds a home in their minds when heard even once. There are many examples of how the gift of Naam is obtained.

(A)

One day Kabir Ji met a wise elderly man. A discussion started and the elderly person asked:

"Tell me who is your guru?"

Kabir Ji replied, "I do not have a guru as yet."

"You must seek a guru." Advised the elderly man.

Kabir agreed to look for one. However, he thought, "I am of low caste and no guru would accept me as his disciple." This thought was due to the fact that in those days there was much discrimination based on high and low castes.

After giving the matter further thought, Kabir decided to go to Banaras, the holy city on Ganges River, and become the disciple of Swami Ramanand. He thought, that he was unlikely to find a more accomplished guru than Ramanand. In his quest for a Guru, regardless of the difficulties in the way, he was determined to take on Ramanand as his guru.

One day, he thought of a strategy. Swami Ramanand used to go to River Ganges every morning to take a bath. Kabir got up very early in the morning and went and laid down in the path which the Swami used to take to Ganges. When Swami Ramanand came for his bath, his foot struck against Kabir Ji's head. Swami Ji felt with the touch of his foot that someone was sleeping. "It is time to take your bath" said Swami Ji as was his nature to say to anyone at that time in the morning, "Get up man of Raam (i.e. God), say *Raam*"

When Kabir Ji heard these words he was immediately in a state of bliss; he had been blessed with the gift of *Naam*. He got up quickly and touched the Swami Ji's feet. In this way he adopted a guru and Waheguru's Name found an abode in his heart.

(B)

Balmeek used to rob travellers and bring up his family on the proceeds of his robberies. Living this type of life, his heart had hardened and become merciless. One day, a group of *sants* (holy people) passed that way. True to his habit, Balmeek took away everything from them. The sants asked, "Brother, why have you done this deed?" "To bring up my family", replied Balmeek. The sants asked, "When you are punished for these misdeeds hereafter, would they share that punishment with you?". He replied, "Certainly, they will". The sants said, "If you are that certain, we will sit here, you go and ask them if they would share your burden." Agreeing to the sants' request Balmeek went home and, first of all, asked his parents if, having lived on the loot he brought home, they would share his sinful burden on the day of reckoning. The parents replied, "We looked after you when you were young. Now it is your duty to serve us. We never asked you to become a robber. We just want food to eat; you can earn your livelihood by some other honest

means so that we get food and clothing. We cannot share your burden of sins." He then asked his wife and she said, "As your wife, I am under your care and it is your marital duty to feed me; I am not responsible for your sins." Then he asked his son who also gave a resounding reply, "Father, I was born in your house, it is your duty to bring me up. I do not say that you should depend on sin for livelihood. You can carry out your responsibilities through honest earnings."

Having heard such forthright responses, a disappointed Balmeek returned to the *sants* and told them everything. That no family member was prepared to stand by him and that he had been mistaken. He said, "From today I shall not do such bad deeds, you show me the right path so that my remaining life can be successful." He returned all that he had taken away from the *sants* and said, "Please forgive me for my mistake." The *sants* thought that the time was right to give him some guidance. Considering everything, the *sants* said, "Keep reciting "*Mara, Mara*" until we return, and then we shall teach you more." Balmeek followed the teaching and kept reciting "*Mara, Mara*" from which recitation, the words being repeated became God's Name "*Raam, Raam*"! By reciting this Name, Balmeek gained popularity and respect in the world. He wrote the epic of *Ramayana* long before the event actually took place.

(c)

In the same way, Ganaka's name comes up. On one occasion a *mahatma* (saintly person) stood close to her door to shelter from the rain. Ganaka saw that a saintly person was standing outside. She invited him in and did *sewa* with respect. When the rain stopped and the *mahatma* prepared to leave, she prayed with folded hands, "I am a sinner and have wasted my life in prostitution, be kind to me so that I can salvage my life." Seeing her condition, the *mahatma* took pity on her. He gave her a parrot and said, "Every morning teach this bird to repeat "*Raam, Raam*"." She started teaching the parrot "*Raam, Raam*" every day. While teaching the parrot "*Raam Raam*" (God's Name) her own spirit became pure and she went to heaven at the end of her life. By saying "*Raam*", she took God's Name to heart.

Similarly, God's Name found a place in the hearts of Bhagat Kabir Ji and Balmeek when they (sincerely and meditatively) said "*Raam*" once. It shows the greatness of Guru Gobind Singh Ji that during the *Amrit Sanchaar* ceremony he instructed the Gursikhs, performing the ceremony to repeat Waheguru's Name thirty times; if even after that, the Name does not find abode in the heart then it is a sign of misfortune. Five times *Amrit* (Ambrosial water) is taken by mouth and with each sip "*Waheguru*" *Mantar* (mystical formula) is repeated, the tongue is purified when doing this. Drops of Amrit are put on the head five times. Everyone's *swas* (breath of life or life energy) is let out from the "tenth door" which is in the head, and putting the drops of Amrit in the head means that the departure of the soul during death is made easier (i.e. death becomes painless and peaceful). *Amrit* is sprinkled into the eyes five times. Thus eyes are purified; so that the eyes should not desire anyone but ones own life partner and the eyes should be able to experience the holy *darshan* (sight) of Guru Ji. Evil doers breathe their last very painfully and with great difficulty. The messengers of Dharamraj (see Glossary) beat the dying sinner from the toes to the top of the head to force out the breath of life. In the Hindu religion it is also written that the pain of death is the same as the stings of a hundred scorpions. Anyone who takes the teachings of Guru Nanak to heart will find salvation. It is very important to do *Naam simran* (reciting Waheguru's Name) with every breath. Waheguru's Name settles in and harmonises with every life breath when recited habitually with each breath. Sitting, standing and sleeping *Naam* repetition continues and when the end comes, due to this habit of *Naam simran*, Waheguru's Name in the dying breath takes one straight to *Sachkhand* (The Plain of Truth where Waheguru resides). Many individuals do not enjoy doing *Naam simran*, just as it takes some time to set fire to wet wood. A

person should not get frustrated. He should accept the Guru's Word and continue with *sewa* and *simran* and Guru Ji will help. Guru Ji will reward those who are doing *sewa* and *simran*. I spent 26 years doing *sewa* and *simran*. For about fifteen years there was no joy in doing so but I continued hoping that *Paramatma* (Waheguru) will shower His Grace. For 26 years I have done *sewa*, believing in the ever presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and always praying for the gift of *Naam* and nothing else. Going to the Gurdwara, I would do the *sewa* of making *Prasaad* (holy sweet sacrament), and *simran*. I would sing and the ladies would sing after me. We would continue with *simran* of "Waheguru, Satnam".

One day Giani Amolak Singh Ji met me at a camp. The children went out to play. We were both discussing *Gurmatt* - Guru's teachings. I told Giani Ji, that when I do *simran* many natural scenes come in my vision. *Shaheed Singhs* (holy spirits of martyred Singhs) help a great deal. If I do not wake up in time then someone rings the bell, when I look out there is no one there. Sometimes they say "Get up and do *Naam simran*". I become aware beforehand of certain things that would happen the following day. Hearing this, Giani Ji said that the Guru's Grace was with me, that I should not tell this generally to people. He spoke of his own experience, that one day Bhai Amrik Singh came to his house. He said, "Today I have done four *paatths* (recitations) of Sukhmani Sahib." Giani Ji replied, "What do you know, I do *paatths* of Sukhmani all night. I work full time, and daily, I do 6 or 7 *paatths*." Giani Ji used to work at night those days. By revealing this, he was never able to do that numbr of *paatths* again.

I told Giani Ji that I had a similar experience. When I used to recite *Mool Mantar* (the Basic Precept) for 12 to 13 hours daily, I let this be known and was never able to do *Mool Mantar* for so many hours again.

Giani Ji explained that just as you should never tell your bank balance to anyone, so is the wealth of *Naam* which should be safe guarded. Giani Ji said that he had been in the company of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji. He had also been in the *sangat* (company) of Baba Ishar Singh Ji and Baba Puran Singh Kencho- waalay. From them one understood how they safeguarded the wealth of *Naam*. Many Gursikhs would ask Bhai Sahib to help them. Bhai Sahib would tell them that Guru Nanak's door was open to all, "As I do *simran*, you can do the same. You will also begin to remain in *chardhi kala* (positive spirit). What can you ask of me, a beggar myself? Beg from Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who has the wealth of *Naam*" I was very much impressed by Giani Ji's words and I began to understand. From that moment on I have not spoken to anyone about achievement of spiritual powers, because, whatever fruit we sow, we have to wait patiently for the reward. Just like the plants of mango or orange bear fruit after 15 to 20 years.

On one occasion I went to see Bhai Balwinder Singh and Bibi Harwinder Kaur. Their friend Dr. Harcharan Singh also came to see them and requested, "I would like to invite Bhai Sahib for dinner." We went to his house. After the meal, I went to see the garden where a mango tree was laden with large mangoes. I mentioned to the doctor that the mangoes looked very sweet. He replied, "Bhai Sahib, this is the first fruit season for this tree. It was planted by my father 20 years ago. He was not able to taste the fruit. It seems we shall not be able to enjoy this fruit either, as we are moving to a larger house." Just as one has to wait for the sweet fruit of mango, so one has to wait for the sweet fruit of *Naam simran*, as it takes time. The taste sense of *Naam* is deep down in a person's soul. Pleasure is more readily felt from sports, entertainment, television, food, sex and other worldly forms of enjoyment, but the deep spiritual pleasure of *Naam* is only enjoyed with the Grace of the Guru. Then your spirit will be immersed in the joy of *Naam*. Every Gursikh desires the joy of *Naam* on the very first day he takes *Amrit* but one needs continuous dedicated

effort to achieve this. Some individuals give up; they feel they have not experienced bliss and they are not likely to; they move away from the Gursikh way of life. I also did a great deal of *simran* but never wavered; accepting the Guru's Will, I continued with *simran*. And, in due course, while doing *simran*, a day arrived when it was like the following:-

"You senseless (like a drunk) person, with your primitive intellect, reverse your breath and turn it inward. Let your mind be intoxicated with the stream of Ambrosial Nectar which trickles down from the furnace of the tenth gate. || 1 || O brothers, call on the Lord. O saints, drink in this wine forever; it is so difficult to obtain, and it quenches your thirst so easily. || 1 || Pause || In the fear of God, is the love of God. Only those few who understand His Love obtain the sublime essence of the Lord, O brothers. As many hearts as there are in all of them, is His Ambrosial Nectar; as He pleases, He causes them to drink it in. || 2 || There are nine gates to the one city of the body; restrain your mind from escaping through them. When the knot of the three qualities is untied, then the tenth gate opens up, and the mind is intoxicated, O brothers. || 3 || When the mortal fully realises the state of fearless dignity, then his sufferings vanish; so says Kabir after careful deliberation. Turning away from the world, I have obtained this wine, and I am intoxicated with it. || 4 || 3 || (SGGS p. 1123)

Suddenly my breathing began to rise to the *dasam dwaar* (tenth secret outlet located in the head), a stage which the yogis achieve only after 30 to 40 years of austere exercises (the word *swaas* or breathing is apparently used in two senses in Panjabi. Firstly, the word describes normal breathing process which is essential for sustaining life in the body. However, the word also has a deeper meaning and it describes the relationship between "life energy" and each breath or *swaas*. Each breath or *swaas* contains this life force and the last breath before dying, takes the spirit via the *dasam dwaar* away to the next destination hereafter. That is the last *swaas*. *Dasam dwaar* - literally the "tenth door" - is supposed to be located in the brain at the top of the head. To be able to reverse these *swaas* inwards and upwards into *dasam dwaar* is the main objective of some yogic exercises. When this is fully achieved, the person actually stops breathing and is in a state of perfect tranquillity and also acquires mysterious mental powers. The *swaas* idea has been translated as "life breath" for the sake of abbreviation in translation. Most probably, taking the *swaas* into *dasam dwaar* is some form of self regulation of the pulse and body functions so that, to the outsider the person shows very few, if any, life signs. Obviously, some part of the brain continues to function while the body remains in a suspended life state (i.e. state of inanimation)).

The yogis can raise their *swas* (life breath) to the *dasam duar* (they stop external breathing during this exercise) but their spiritual pulsation remains "empty" (i.e. without the bliss of *Naam*) when they are in that state. Those Gursikhs who after taking Amrit recite "Waheguru" with every breath, their *simran* automatically continues (even when undergoing the *dasam duar* experience). *Naam* which inhabits their *swas* takes them straight to the *Sach-khand* (see Glossary). I was never told the method of elevating the *swas* to *dasam duar* but learnt it with Waheguru's Grace. While continuing routinely with *Naam simran*, after 15 to 20 years, one day, quite unexpectedly my breathing reversed inwards and upwards. I had a slight irritating sensation on my forehead and I kept stroking my forehead above my nose, time and again. When the *swas* (life breath) reaches here, then all distracting thoughts stop. The mind is in a state of equilibrium and one feels like continuing with *simran*. Starting with the feet, the body goes numb. There is no sensation and one does not know if the body is still there. I had to do many hours of *simran* and *sewa* daily to reach this stage. Nothing can be achieved by just talking, nor will there be any spiritual joy.

"Some wander around, babbling on and on, but none obtain Him by babbling." (SGGS p. 919)

Institutions of Langar and Pangat

For the purpose of *Amrit Sanchar*, Bhai Subeg Singh invited the Jatha to Australia and New Zealand. The first *Amrit Sanchar* took place at Sydney and the second at Auckland. The accommodation arrangement for the Jatha was in the Gurdwara at Sydney. The General Secretary of the Gurdwara introduced us to the world renowned Dr Pritam Singh. Praise goes to the Guru that even after gaining such high qualifications, the doctor retains his full Sikh identity and observes the Sikh code of conduct (*rehat*). He has great interest in listening to Kirtan. He records and distributes the Kirtan of any *raagi* jatha singing at the Gurdwara. He is so modest that he is not prepared to become the president of the Gurdwara; says he is not fit for such a position. Yet, there are also those who do not understand Gurbani, but they always feel that they are ready for such responsible positions.

In the Gurdwara, two parties were at loggerheads with each other. The first party preferred an arrangement of chairs and tables in the *Langar*. The president of the new party, Bhai Jasvir Singh wanted to introduce the *Guru Ghar* (Guru's House) tradition according to the correct *Rehat Maryada*: to seat the sangat in rows on the floor (*pangat*) as in Sri Harmandar Sahib (Amritsar), and to serve *langar* after *Naam Simraan* for ten minutes. In this way the family which was doing the *sewa* of the *langar* would also benefit. Finally both parties agreed to abide by Dr Pritam Singh's decision. The Doctor said, "At home we sit on chairs, what is the harm if at the Gurdwara we sit on the floor for ten minutes to partake of the *langar*? We should sit in humility in the *Guru Ghar*. This is the Guru's teaching. It is for the benefit of all. Firstly, *simraan* is done and secondly, in the *Guru Ghar*, the more one remains in humility the greater the spiritual reward. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was always humble, you are not higher than him." Both parties respected his decision and from that day the *sangat* partakes in the *Langar* by sitting in a *pangat*.

In the same way at Darlington Gurdwara in England the *sangat* takes *Langar* sitting in a *pangat* after *Naam simran*. At Shepherd's Bush and at Derby (at Guru Arjan Dev Ji's Gurdwara) the same *maryada* (Guru's tradition) is followed. To give importance to any individual in the *Langar* is a great violation of the institution of the *Langar*. It matters not which Sikh religious organisation that person leads. To give priority treatment to an individual over the *Sangat* sitting in *pangat* is a great insult to the Guru's *Sangat*. For continuity of the great tradition of *Sangat* and *Pangat*, every Sikh should refrain from such insulting behaviour.

Signs of a Restless Mind

One day, the Sovereign of *miri* (temporal) and *piri* (spiritual) worlds, Sri Guru Hargobind Ji was going through the jungle with his Gursikhs. The all knowing *Satguru* (True Guru) stopped under a tree. He told a Sikh, "Climb up this tree and kill a crow chick, it is in need of salvation." The Sikh climbed up, looked into the crow's nest and said, "Guru Ji there are many chicks here, which is the one in need of salvation?" Guru Ji replied, "It will cry out to you." And so the chick was redeemed.

The Sikhs were wondering about Guru Ji's *kautak* (mysterious action). One Sikh asked, "Guru Ji! What crime had this creature committed?" Guru Ji told the Sikhs, "In his previous life he was a devotee of the Guru's House. He would go to the Gurdwara daily. One day a *katha* (interpretation of Gurbani by a learned person at the Gurdwara) was in process and the *Sangat* was listening with concentration. His friend was sitting next to him and he started talking to his friend. There are many devotees in the *Sangat* who are in meditative link with Waheguru Ji. The conversation between these two distracted a Sikh from his meditation and he said, "Why do you go on with your *kan kan* like a crow?" For this reason this Sikh who was talking in *Sangat* was reborn as a crow.

When *paatth*, *kirtan* or *katha* (recitation of Gurbani, Gurbani singing or explanation of Gurbani) is going on in Gurdwaras, some people keep on talking. One should sit quietly and peacefully in the *Sangat* and listen to the Guru's Word (Guru's Teaching).

On one occasion a large *Sangat* was going for *darshan* of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. In those days they used to travel by foot. As they were going, a snake blocked their path. It kept coming in the way of the *Sangat*. They thought, perhaps this snake too wants to go for Guru Ji's *darshan*. They had an earthen pot and they said to the snake that if it wanted to go for Guru Ji's *darshan*, it should enter the pot. That is what the snake did.

On reaching the Gurdwara, the *Sangat* went for Guru Ji's *darshan*. The all knowing Guru Ji asked, "Where is my one other Sikh? You have not brought him in with you." The *Sangat* said that there was no other Sikh, except for a snake in a pot, and they brought the pot and placed it in front of Guru Ji. The snake got out of the pot and bowed its hood in front of Guru Ji. Guru Ji, aware of the wrongdoing of the creature in its previous life, was forgiving. He sprinkled holy water on the creature and gave it salvation (freedom) from the life of a snake. The *Sangat* asked, "Guru Ji what is this *kautak* (strange happening)?"

Guru Ji explained that in its previous human life, this person had the habit of stealing. He did not refrain from stealing even in the Gurdwara. As he would respectfully get on his knees to bow his head before the Guru (*matha tekan*), he would make an offering of one rupee (Indian currency) and, without anyone seeing, would pick up more. He used to attend *Sangat* daily. He would keep on thinking about money and at the end of his life he was still thinking about wealth. And so, he was reborn a snake. However, because he had been attending *Sangat*, he was aware that he had done wrong. For that reason he has come for Guru's *darshan* to seek forgiveness. The True Guru is compassionate and saves those who come to Him. The wrong doing of the snake in its previous life was forgiven and its spirit was freed from that unhappy life.

"At the very last moment, one who thinks of wealth, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again, in the form of serpents." (SGGS p. 526)

(C)

The holy *darbar* (royal court - See "Darbar" in the glossary) of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was in session. On this occasion, an animal trainer brought a large bear into the *darbar*. He started wrestling with the bear in front of Guru Ji. He then made the bear dance and perform other tricks. Bhai Keertia was doing *chaur* (see Glossary) on Guru Ji. He kept laughing loudly at the tricks of the bear. Guru Ji said to him, "Bhai Keertia, this bear was your father in its previous life." Hearing this Bhai Keertia and the *Sangat* were greatly surprised. Bhai Keertia folded his hands before the Guru and said, "O True Guru, my father always did regular *sewa* in your *darbar*. My father also served the Ninth King (Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji) whose *darshan* (holy sight) gave salvation to thousands of Sikhs. If having done such dedicated *sewa*, this is the reward my father has reaped, then what is the point of doing *sewa* and what life form would I get next? *Sewa* is done to seek salvation, but if the reward is the opposite, then no Sikh will do *sewa* in future. Kindly please tell me, why my father got into this life form."

The True Guru said, "Listen Bhai Keertia, one day your father was serving *Prasaad* (sweet sacrament). At that time a Sikh was passing by with his bullock-cart. He came into the *darbar* to pay his respects (for *matha tekna*) and seeing that *Prasaad* was being served, he asked for *Prasaad* from your father with great devotion and respect. The Sikh's face and beard was covered with dust. Your father seeing his dirt covered face did not give him *Prasaad* but kept on serving it to others. When the Sikh got in front of your father again and repeated his request, your father said in rage, "Why do you keep jumping up and down like a bear! Go and sit down at the back. You will receive your *Prasaad* in turn." On hearing this, the Sikh (who had left his *gadda* i.e. large bullock-cart moving on), picked up a small bit of *Prasaad* which had fallen on the floor, put it into his mouth saying "Waheguru", and rushed off saying, "You may be the bear!"

When your father passed away, he was reborn a bear. The humble Gursikh's words came to be true. Bhai Keertia prayed to Guru Ji to forgive his father. Guru Ji sprinkled holy water on the bear and freed its spirit from that life form. The animal trainer was given a generous compensation.

The True Guru always rewards those who come to Him and do *sewa* at the Gurdwara. The True Guru is merciful and very generous. He does not look at anyone's previous wrong doings and always offers salvation.

If a person wants to succeed in achieving the main purpose of this life, then he or she should do *sewa* in the Gurdwara. Doing *sewa* purifies the hands. If a Gursikh who has taken *Amrit*, does *simran* and reads *Gurbani*, then even if he (or she) does not achieve salvation in this life then success will come in the next. However, this life objective will be achieved only if *sewa* and *simran* are done in humility by giving up *haumai* (ego or pride).

The Fine Edge of Gursikhi

(*Gursikhi* is like walking on the fine edge of a sword.)

"I am blind, totally blind, entangled in corruption and poison. How can I walk on the Guru's Path? If the True Guru, the Giver of peace, shows His kindness, He attaches us to the hem of His robe. f | 1 | | O Sikhs of the Guru, O friends, walk on the Guru's Path. Whatever the Guru says, accept that as good; the sermon of the Lord is unique and wonderful. | | 1 | | Pause | | O Saints of the Lord, O brothers, listen: serve the Guru, quickly now! Let your service to the True Guru be your supplies on the Lord's Path; pack them up, and don't think of today or tomorrow. | | 2 | | O Saints of the Lord, chant the chant of the Lord's Name; the Lord's Saints walk with the Lord. Those who meditate on the Lord, become the Lord; the playful, wondrous Lord meets them. | | 3 | | To chant the chant of the Lord's Name is the longing I long for; have mercy upon me, O Lord of the world-forest. O Lord, unite servant Nanak with the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy; make me the dust of the feet of the Holy. | | 4 | |"
(SGGS p. 667)

"O True Guru Ji! Although, I am called your Sikh, my need for sleep is not satisfied even after sleeping all night; sometimes, I even sleep during the day; and there is no question of getting up early in the morning. No problem about taking a bath in the summer, but not so in the winter. Even in summer, I try to dodge the evening bath. Why, because that risks wetting the beard fixed with "Fixo" (Brand name of a special glue for fixing the hair of the beard)!

If the beard gets wet once then the problem of re-fixing it arises. There is no time in the morning for doing *paatth* (Gurbani recitation), for, by the time I have washed up and fixed the beard, it is time to rush to the office. I tie the turban only once for the whole week. If I have to tie it daily, then I can never reach the office in time. Sometimes, while getting up and doing the morning routine, I am delayed and have to take my tea at the office canteen. Even otherwise, if our little son gets stubborn and does not allow his Mum to leave the bedroom, I have to take my tea at the canteen.

When the weekend arrives, most of the time is taken up in taking bath, washing and for other chores. With difficulty we manage to find time in the evening to go to the cinema. Often I think of going to the Gurdwara on Sunday but on that day I am unable to get up early in the morning. In any case, it is only after six days that one has time to relax on Sunday. So one has to get rid of the fatigue accumulated during the week. All day, one is busy in the office with paperwork and in the evening there is hardly time to listen to soothing songs on the radio. One longs for those songs played in response to special requests from listeners. Once the programme starts then one wishes that it would continue all night.

There is much inflation these days and one can hardly manage within one's salary. Until one is able to contrive ways for some additional income "under the table" (i.e. through bribery), one cannot meet the month's expenditure. According to the *Rehatnama* one is supposed to denote a tenth of one's income for religious/charitable purposes, but that is only possible if the expenditure needs are satisfied. "Mum" always keeps asking for something. "Ji, get me a sari of nylax; get me a Banarsi suit; get me high heeled shoes; and lipstick, and cream are finished. Get me a vanity box and so on." Last year our little son was taken ill with small pox and our neighbour Madan Lai's wife said, "Brother, take the child to the temple of Mata Devi (goddess of small pox). On Sunday, people come with offerings (in return for cure of small pox by the goddess). You also take *Prasaad* as

offering to the Mata and take the child with you so that it can kneel before the goddess and perform *matha tekna* (pay homage). Mata Devi will be pleased and the child will be cured." I was still thinking about this while the "Mum" quietly took the child to the temple of the goddess to pay homage." (From a publication: *Rahini Rahay Soi Sikh Mera.*)

Why has the life style of the Sikh nation changed? It is surprising that three hundred years have passed since the formal institution of the Khalsa and, until now, the Khalsa has not been able to establish own rule. There must be some reason for this. There are great scholars, *gianis* (those with knowledge of Gurbani and Sikh tradition) and *raagis* (Gurbani singers) in the Sikh religion. But they have not spread the True Word of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Guru Ji proclaimed:

"*Rehat* (Sikh code of discipline) is dear to me, not a Sikh"

Such weakness has crept into the Sikhs, that no one is paying attention to *rehat*. They have shunned *Amrit* and take alcohol, they have shunned truth and speak falsehood. The ladies have uncovered their heads. Before going to school or for work, some girls do go to the Gurdwara for *matha tekan*, but borrow a scarf from the Gurdwara just for that purpose. The tradition of keeping a head cloth (*dupatta*) is dying out. Guru Ji gave the gift of Keski (small turban) to men and women alike, but now even the *dupatta* (or *chunni*) is disappearing! Today the children of Sikhs have also become so fashionable that sometimes one cannot tell the difference between a boy and a girl.

One day someone rang the bell at our house. I opened the door and the person asked, "Is Jassi at home?" I replied, "Bhain Ji (i.e. sister), he has gone out." This person had long hair, was wearing two earrings in each ear and seemed to be about 16 years old. When Jassi came home I told him that a girl had come to see him and that I was going to let his dad know that he had made a girl friend. Jassi said, "Uncle Ji, I do not have any girl friend. What are you saying?" I said do not lie to me. I saw her myself." Jassi then remembered that his friend was coming to drop a film; it must be "him". He described him and I confirmed. Jassi said, "Oh that Talwinder is my friend. He is not a girl, he is a boy!" I explained to Jassi that when we administer *Amrit*, we forbid girls to pierce their noses and ears (for the purpose of wearing ornaments), but nowadays even the boys have started piercing holes in their ears for wearing rings. Jassi said, "Uncle Ji, nowadays that is the fashion." I was taken aback and felt that this was a reflection on parent's weakness with regard to their children.

If the parents had been wise, they would have told their children the history of the Gurus; how Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji sacrificed his whole family. I say to all Sikhs, "Daughters, sisters and mothers! For the sake of *Gursikhi* (Gursikh way of life), look after this flower garden planted by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He put the (growth promoting) fertiliser of the blood of his father Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, mother Mata Gujri Ji, his four sons, the *Panj Piaray*, the *Chaali Muktay* and hundreds of thousands of Sikh martyrs to ensure a healthy bloom (The forty Sikhs who had first abandoned Guru Ji at Ananpur but then gave their lives to defend him at Mukatsar. They were blessed by Guru Ji as the forty (*chaali* in Panjabi) who had been saved and thus received their salvation, (mukti). Thus they are remembered as the *Chaali Muktay* or the Forty who received salvation by the Guru's Blessing at Mukatsar).

For preserving this garden of *Sikhi*, many brave Sikh women (*Singhania*) received into their laps their little children cut into pieces, so that this garden of the *Sikhi* would not wither. Even now there is time to undo the harm. Look after your children and teach them to follow the path of *Gursikhi*, adopt Khalsa identity and dress; live the Khalsa way.

"One who lives the Khalsa way (*rehani*) is my Sikh".
(Bhai Desa Singh's *Rehat Nama*, quoting Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji)

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's injunction is that five specified *Banis* (Gurbani compositions) should be recited in the morning as part of *Nit Nem* (daily routine). But nowadays the *Rehat Maryada* (Code of the Sikh way of life) published by the Shromani Prabandhak Committee, at page 10, prescribes for reciting 3 *Banis* in the morning: Jap Ji Sahib, Jaap Sahib and Sawayas, and two *Banis* in the evening. For this reason the Khalsa is not receiving the full spiritual strength of five *Banis* in the morning. The *Panj Piaray* had instructed the Khalsa that recitation of five *Banis* in the morning was essential.

Those who do not recite five *Banis* in the morning do not receive the blessing of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Once I was reading *Se Kinahia*, the life story of Sri Maan Baba Harnam Singh Ji of Rampur, Khara, in which is written that one day, in the month of *Jetth* (lunar month falling in May/June), it was very hot. This is what Baba Harnam Singh Ji wrote: -

"I was reciting *Mool Mantar* in a room. The door opened and a Gursikh with a very radiant face walked in. We exchanged the *Gur Fateh* greeting. Whereupon the Sikh said that the *Dasam Patshah* (the Tenth King i.e. Guru Gobind Singh Ji) was coming to bless me with His *darshan*. I was thrilled and we both came out of the room. In the western direction we saw the Satguru Ji riding a horse and there were four other Singhs with Him. Satguru Ji came near and paused. I bowed in homage at Guru Ji's holy feet in the stirrup. Guru Ji smiled a little and moved away. At a little distance He disappeared. I was left in a confused state.

"The other Gursikh who had brought the message of Guru Ji's arrival kept standing near me. He said, "Bhai Harnam Singh Ji! You should be very happy but you look confused and sad; what is the reason?" I told that Gursikh that the Satguru blessed me with his *darshan* but did not speak a word.

"The Gursikh replied, "Satguru Ji is pleased with your meditative *Naam simran*, for which reason he gave you *darshan*. He did not speak to you because in your *Nit Nem* you do not do the *Paatth* of Jaap Sahib." I said that I did not do Jaap Sahib because it was a difficult *Paatth* to recite. Everyday I recite Sri Sukhmani Sahib and Asa Di Vaar." The Gursikh replied, "It is very important that the injunction of Guru Sahib is followed. No matter how many other *Banis* a Sikh recites, if the prescribed *Banis* of the *Nit Nem* are not recited, Guru Ji will not be entirely pleased. If one follows the injunction of the Guru passed on to the Sikhs through the *Panj Piaray* and then recites other *Banis*, that pleases Guru Ji very much. One who is lax about accepting this injunction is deprived of Guru Ji's blessing."

From that day, no matter how long it takes, I included the recitation of Jaap Sahib in my *Nit Nem*, and in time, learnt it by heart. Gurbani also confirms that the order of the Guru must be accepted and followed." (The above is Baba Harnam Singh Ji's personal experience narrated by the author.)

Amritdhari (those who have taken Amrit) Gursikhs must follow the orders of the *Panj Piaray*. The recitation (*paatth*) of Five *Banis* in the morning is extremely important.

(The five *Banis* in the morning are Jap Ji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Ten Swayyas, Chaupai and Full Anand Sahib. Rehras should be recited at sunset and Kirtan Sohila just before going to bed.)

The Transformation

Sweet Lord! I wander in confusion;

Where is the path, where the beacon?

I grope in the dark, am weary and disillusioned;

The chains of sin enslave me.

I'm cold and lonely, Lord!

Show me the way.

Your Beloved Five have I sought and they tell me;

"The Light is within you."

I believe and behold!... The door is unlocked!

I knock and it glides open, I patiently kindle Your Light and it shows the way.

Not looking back, I gaze straight ahead And lo! the path is clear before me.

Sweet Lord! the path is clear kindly receive me,

(A pang of fear grasps my heart,

I call on you, Guru Gobind Singh; You infuse me with courage;

My fears and doubts dissipate.) They speak of beauty, truth, duty, spirituality,

Rebirth, renewal and the love of You, Lord.

As they speak, a flash of your light brightens my life.

A load is lifted off my shoulders,

My heart rejoices: "I've found the Truth."

My thirst is quenched, my search is ended.

Satguru! I embrace your lotus-feet at least.

I sing your Holy Name as I take the Kande-Ki-Pahul.

Your nectar Name makes me whole,

The Light in me is focused to its Source.

By the whisper of Your name, The sleeping crysalis is transformed Into a carefree butterfly.

O Waheguru! I am Your lowly servant;

Nothing is mine, all is Yours; Your Name do I take with every breath,

I revel in Your wonderful garden;

O Righteous Master! I am Yours forever;

To do with as You wish; An instrument through which to work Your Will.

O Generous Master!

Your Name each moment do I recite;

My cares flee like darkness before the dawn;

In the flame of Your name Do the dreaded five (Arrogance, anger, lust, greed and attachment) melt like butter.

O Waheguru!

The seed of the Khalsa grows in the soil of faith;

Watered with Amrit, warmed by the love of Nam;

Its roots take strong hold Its graceful stalks stand tall above the rest;

Its fragrant blooms are profuse, The harvest promises to be abundant.

If the seed can be assured healthy growth.

O Sat guru! I am a sacrifice Unto the lovers of Your Name; The martyrs, the seekers of Truth,

The upholders of righteousness; The magnanimous souls, the innocent children The compassionate servants of humanity;

The pure ... the Satsangat... The Khalsa.

"Truth is higher than everything But higher still is truthful living."

By JAGJIT KAUR KHALSA (Jagjit Kaur Khalsa is a French Canadian lady who has recently initiated into Sikhism).

Elections at Gurdwaras

No one is prepared to listen to one another. In the Khalsa Panth too there are different factions. They do not listen to one another, each one of them says, "Only what we are doing is right." For the sake of leadership in the Gurdwaras they do dishonest things. They make dummy votes for winning elections. Fights take place in the Gurdwaras. They do not fully respect Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If we accept Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the perfect Guru, then why do we go to non-Sikhs to conduct elections. When we want something then we pray to Guru Ji. We arrange *Paatths* (complete reading of Guru Granth Sahib) to be done and ask for special *Ardaas* (prayers) to be said for us so that our inner wishes are fulfilled. Satguru (True Guru) showers His Blessing and our prayers are answered, still we do not have complete faith in Satguru. We wander around outside, away from the Guru.

I was told by a French born young lady, Bibi Jagjeet Kaur, who keeps full Sikh identity, that in this Age of darkness, *Kalyog*, the perfect Guru is Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and she has total belief in the Guru. If someone prays in total faith then certainly the Guru listens. The Guru knows what is in every mind. She said, "I was involved in a road accident and my car hit another car. When the accident occurred, many were prepared to give evidence against me. I was very worried. I was afraid of the other party's witnesses that I would lose the case. When the date for the hearing came, I prayed to Satguru that You know everything, I do not know whose fault it is. I have no witness, please save the honour of truth. I did *Ardaas* (standing prayer) took a *Hukamnama* (random reading of a hymn from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji for guidance). When I appeared before the judge, no witness for the other party showed up. I won the case."

When the time for changing the management committee of a Gurdwara comes, we do not pay heed to any guidance of Satguru Ji. There are some Gurdwaras which accept Guru Ji's guidance. When selecting a new committee, they do *Ardaas* and draw lots and those selected become the new committee members. This is what happens at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Slough (UK).

One day, Giani Pritam Singh Ji, the Head Granthi of Patna Sahib Ji, was doing *katha* at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara. He said that one day the Khalsa will become so feeble that they will not even care for the Guru. For self-centred leaderships, the Khalsa will turn their backs on the Guru. The Giani Ji said that even during the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji the question of Khalsa *Raj* (independent Khalsa rule) came up. The Singhs asked, "Why do you not give *Raj* to the Khalsa?" The all knowing Guru Ji carried out an unusual test. He asked for sweet rice to be prepared with many other expensive and delicious ingredients and spread this rice on a white sheet. He asked for about a dozen dogs to be brought in. When the dogs saw the rice they started barking and snarling at each other. None ate the rice, they just spread the rice around in dirt with their feet and kept snarling at each other.

In the same way the Singhs are not understanding the value of Gurbani. They quarrel with each other for leadership. Until such time as the Khalsa begins to observe *rehat* (the prescribed code of conduct), recite Gurbani and do *Naam simran*, Khalsa will not get own *raj*.

In London on one occasion a devotee arranged for an *Akhand Paatth* (continuous reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji which takes about 48 hours). The family had set up a camera for video recording of the *Paatth*. They were watching on the TV screen while doing *sewa* of *langar* (preparing and serving food as in the Gurdwara). The Giani Ji doing the *Paatth* was left on his own

in the room where Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was kept. The Giani Ji became greedy, got up and picked up the money offered by devotees, lying in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. When the family saw what was going on (on their TV screen), they asked the Giani Ji to stop doing *Paatth* and to leave. The Giani Ji was puzzled. He said, "You have started this *Akhand Paatth* which is meant to be non stop; it will be interrupted." The family said, "The interruption has already happened. You better go. You picked up money placed before the Guru while you were supposed to be doing *paatth*." He did not confess. They said that it is recorded on video, you can see it. On hearing this he was very embarrassed and went away. It was night and no one even drove him back to his place.

There was a newspaper report that in India, at one village, a Gursikh family arranged an *Akhand Paatth*. There was a group of five *paatthis* (those who read from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). One of them was a boy of about 18 years old. He was doing *paatth* at night. The daughter of the family, a pretty girl, was listening to the *paatth* on her own. The young *paatthi's* mind wavered and he started "reading" nonsense, "*Mahala Panjwan*, O girl bring me some warm tea." The girl was surprised and went and asked her mother if such words were included in any hymn. The mother told the father, who in turn told the young *paatthi* Singh to stop doing *paatth* to pick up his clothes and to make a speedy exit. The boy ran away.

Many individuals have no fear of the Guru. They have forgotten God. A person thinks that no one is watching. But the Satguru knows all. He knows what is in each heart. You can keep secrets from other people but you cannot hide anything from God. Who knows with what wishes and hopes these people had asked for *Akhand Paatths*, but greed and lust interrupted the continuous reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Nowadays, the Sikhs have moved away from *rehat* that is the reason why the Sikhs had to suffer the tragic events since 1984. They have become so entrapped in materialism that it is difficult to escape from it. Even the *Amritdhari* Sikhs are caught up in this trap. For Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, *rehat* is dear. No one is preaching the importance of *rehat*. The *Sangat* does not have that much knowledge and is wandering about aimlessly. Every person is looking for an easy way to realise God. Many people are becoming *Radha Swami* and *Nirankari*. These sects do not follow any code of conduct. If one is looking for salvation then keeping *rehat* is very important.

Once I went to India with Bhai Amrik Singh. We stayed at Moga town, at the house of the in-laws of Bhai Amrik Singh. After *Nit Nem* (i.e. reciting morning *Banis*) we went to see the local Gurdwara Sahib. After paying our respects to the Guru, we sat on a bed in the veranda. The Granthi Ji (priest) came and sat on the other bed. Soon a lady came with her child. The child was not well. Granthi Ji took off his *Kara* (steel bangle) and waved it up and down in front of the child's face while whispering some magical words. He then told the lady, "You can go, your child will be fine." We sat in amazement.

I told the Granthi Ji, "You are the Guru's minister. What *manmatt* (anti-*Gurmatt* i.e. against Guru's teaching) are you preaching? You know very well that the ever present Guru Ji sits in the Gurdwara. It was your duty to tell the lady, to first go inside and bow before the Guru who is ever present and Timeless. Then you should have advised her to do Waheguru *simran*, *paatth* of Mool Mantar, of Jap Ji Sahib or of Sukhmani Sahib.

"The medicine for all types of illness is Naam" (SGGS p. 274)

You should have directed her to seek comfort from *Bani*. Reading or listening to Bani cures all pain and unhappiness. The lady did not know this. And you, instead of showing her the right path, started reading some magic formula. When are we going to understand how to respect Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji? If Granthis do not put the *sangat* on the straight path then who would?"

Granth Ji was embarrassed and realised his mistake.

Once, while walking around, Baba Nand Singh Ji came across a well. It was summer. The water-wheel on the well was being turned by two oxen harnessed to the long wooden operating arm (The bulls pull this operating arm and move round in a circle and the water wheel is turned by a system of cog wheels connected to the operating arm. The whole system is called a *haalt*. These water wheels have now been taken over by motor driven tube-well systems).

The tongues of the oxen were hanging out due to the heat and the strain. They were struggling to keep going. They were praying to God to give them death instead of putting them through such torture. Baba Ji stopped near them and said, "Well brothers! This is the type of suffering you go through without doing *sewa* and *simran*. You are now being punished." Hearing this, both oxen lowered their heads and started crying. Baba Ji asked the farmer to rest the oxen and to irrigate his farm at night (when it is cooler).

Hearing this, the farmer said with folded hands, "Baba Ji, we are workers. The crops are drying up. Even after turning the water-wheel day and night the crops are not receiving the proper irrigation. It has not rained, and if we stop the water-wheel, the crops will dry up." On hearing this, Baba Ji said, "O Good man, pick up your *kahi* (long handled appliance used for digging) and come with me." The farmer released the oxen and walked with Baba Ji. There were other Singhs with Baba Ji as well. One asked, "Baba Ji who are these souls suffering as oxen?" Baba Ji replied, "These were Granthis in their previous lives. One Granthi used to shut Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in a closet, while he slept in a comfortable bed. He regarded the Guru as a book. Due to lack of faith he has suffered this pain."

The Singhs asked about the second Granthi (who was reborn an ox), that he too must have committed a similar sacrilege. Baba Ji said, "One day, when I was doing *sewa* at Hajoor Sahib, a *Shaheed Singh* (spirit of a Sikh martyr) took possession of this Granthi. The latter kept crying out to the *Shaheed* to let him go, that he was a Granthi doing *sewa*, and pleaded that he should not be harmed." The *Shaheed Singh* replied, "Did you do *sewa* or meted out punishment? You should be punished." Saying this, the *Shaheed* started pouring paraffin oil into his mouth. The Granthi kept crying out aloud but no one could free him. The Granthi was in poor condition. After pouring oil into him he was also beaten severely and knocked unconscious. The onlookers were amazed. The local *sewadars* (those doing *sewa*) took him outside. When he regained consciousness he was asked why had the *Shaheed Singh* beaten him, what wrong had he done. The Granthi confessed, "At my village I used to get many requests for doing *Paatth* (complete reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). I could not complete them and also the people concerned did not do proper *sewa*. For this reason I used to complete the ceremony of *Bhog* (completion of *Paatth*) without actually reading the complete Guru Granth Sahib Ji. I used to think:

"Read the beginning, read the end and just do *darshan* inside; Consider all as "read" by dawn; and leave the result with the housewife!"

To mislead the people I would get up early in the morning and without taking a bath, I would do *Paatth* in the light of a paraffin lamp. I would refill the lamp from a paraffin bottle lying nearby, and with hands smelling of paraffin would touch the pages of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. For that sacrilege, the *Shaheed* put paraffin in my mouth."

Baba Ji said that after witnessing such mysterious happenings, the number of people going to Hajoor Sahib began to dwindle. Seeing this the *pujari* (person who performed religious ceremonies) prayed to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, "O True King (*Saache Patshah*) if you continue to be so strict on wrongdoers (as in the case of the Granthi mentioned above), then people will stop coming here. O True King, if you punish someone, please make the punishment hidden. Do not punish offenders so openly. Everyone errs once in a while." Following that *Ardaas* (prayer), public punishment of sinners stopped but hidden punishment continues.

After some time, the two Granthi died and were reborn as oxen and suffered this punishment. The Singhs asked, "In which case why rescue them? You should have allowed them to continue receiving their punishment." Baba Ji replied, "Nevertheless, they were doing *sewa*. Sons can ignore their parents, but the parents cannot do the same." In the meantime, Baba Ji reached his abode. He said to the farmer, "Build a ridge around my hut." The farmer asked, "How high?" Baba Ji replied, "Make it as high as you want the water level in your fields to be." The farmer was delighted and did accordingly. As soon as he had finished, rain clouds came overhead. The farmer bowed before Baba Ji and as soon as he reached his well, rain started. It rained to the level of the ridge he had raised around Baba Ji's hut. The fields were watered and the crops were no longer dry.

Injustice

Following the independence of the country in 1947, there has been anarchy in India. There are laws but no one follows them. The government itself does not follow them, why should we expect the public to follow them? One example is that about five thousand girls burn to death (i.e. cases of suicide or murder by burning) every year due to the cruel dowry system (property or money a bride brings to her husband from her parents. Girls who are unable to satisfy the greed of their in-laws suffer a terrible fate sometimes). Most involved in such cruelties go scot free. If you rent a house the tenants just take over the house. There is no remedy through the courts. Bribery is the order of the day. The same goes for farm land which is taken over by those who rent it from you. Theft is common. The police collude with those that are guilty.

On the Vaisakhi day in 1978, the false Nirankaris camped at the holy city, Sri Amritsar Sahib, and used derogatory language about Sri Guru Granth Sahib (A breakaway Sikh sect. "Nirankari" literally means a follower of Nirankar i.e. God. They are false because, instead of following True God's path, they started toeing the devious political aims of the ruling party in India against the main stream Sikhism). The false Nirankari Gurbachan *Sihon* claimed himself to be the Guru (for he did not deserve to be called a "Singh". *Sihon* is used by non-Sikhs, although, it means the same i.e. lion), "I have been ordained the Sikh prophet and preacher by God. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is nothing but a book. The Sikhs have been misled and have started believing this book to be their True Guru." The city people heard this blasphemy and were taken aback. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale also heard that this false messiah (Gurbachan) was spreading sacrilegious falsehood against Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. At that time, the Akhand Kirtani Jatha from many Indian states had assembled at Amritsar for celebrating Vaisakhi *Purab* (religious day) and the anniversary of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji. They had been doing *kirtan* of *Amrit Bani* (Ambrosial Word of the Guru) from the early morning. A message arrived from Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale that the false Nirankari Gurbachan Singh was using disrespectful language against *Satguru Ji* and making fun of *Gursikhi* (the Sikh way of life).

"Khalsa shall not hear anyone denouncing the Guru, but put them to the sword." (Rehatnama).

Jathedar Fauja Singh and the other Singhs were aggrieved to hear this. They started out together with the *Jatha* (group) of Bhindranwale to take this matter up with the fake Nirankari guru. The group walked to the Nirankari place; however the police stopped them and asked for the reason for their visit. The *Jatha* said that they had come peacefully to discuss matters; the police officer in-charge offered to go inside and mediate on their behalf. That police officer, together with his colleagues, came out after about half an hour. They told the *Jatha* to go back. In the meantime, the Nirankaris attacked the *Jatha*.

They started firing and throwing stones. Thirteen Singhs were killed in this attack and seventy injured. However, there was no justice from the Indian authorities. The Nirankaris should have been punished, but the court ruled that they did not have any case to answer. It was all the fault of the Singhs and the Nirankaris were released! What sort of justice was that? How long would such a regime last? Hearing the verdict of the court, Bhai Ranjit Singh resolved that he would punish the offenders; he risked his life and killed Gurbachan *Sihon*. Thirteen Sikh men died upholding their faith. The names of the thirteen martyred Singhs are as follows:- Bhai Fauja Singh Ji, Bhai Avtar Singh Ji, Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji, Bhai Piara Singh Ji, Bhai Raghubir Singh Ji, Bhai Gurcharan Singh Ji, Bhai Gurdial Singh Ji, Bhai Amrik Singh Ji, Bhai Dharamvir Singh Ji, Bhai Kewal

Singh Ji Bhai Hari Singh Ji, Bhai Ranbir Singh Ji and Bhai Darshan Singh Ji. They are remembered as *shaheeds*.



The Holocaust

Forgetting God, O man, what horrendous deeds have you done? Arrogance is not acceptable to God, O man, what have you done?

The powerful Rawan became arrogant, "no warrior is equal to me". He brought home another's woman, who was blameless.

(As a result) he witnessed golden Lanka burning, and thought why did I earn animosity.

As Rama's arrows pierced his chest, he regretted repeatedly. Forgetting God, O man, what horrendous deeds have you done? Arrogance is not acceptable to God, O man, what have you done?

Arrogance possessed Daryodhan, "Immovable, I shall rule". He ordered the de-clothing of Dropadi in full gathering.

All sat quiet and no-one came to her aid.

In desperation, Dropadi prayed to Krishan Bhagwan.

Forgetting God, O man, what horrendous deeds have you done? Arrogance is not acceptable to God, O man, what have you done?

Arrogant became Gurbachan Singh, "Why should I not do as I please?

I have been sent from above, to look after the Sikhs.

The Sikhs recognise me not, where should I complain?

No guru comparable to me will be found even if you search every house."

Forgetting God, O man, what horrendous deeds have you done? Arrogance is not acceptable to God, O man, what have you done?

The false *baba* (Gurbachna) was victorious, people showered flowers on him.

The *baba* gloated with dancing and celebration.

Ranjit Singh shot him and the *baba* cried out in pain.

The *baba* fell to the ground, "Come someone and save my life". Forgetting God, O man, what horrendous deeds have you done?

Arrogance is not acceptable to God, O man, what have you done?

Arrogance possessed Indra Gandhi, "My power is great.

I shall kill Gursikhs, their numbers are few.

India is independent, now they are not needed.

It is not acceptable to me that they ask for an independent state".
Forgetting God, O man, what horrendous deeds have you done?

Arrogance is not acceptable to God, O man, what have you done?

Many advised her not to make trouble in God's abode.

Placing the bundle of sins on her head she wronged truthfulness.

The blind Indra Gandhi put out her own flame (of life).

"I am in the clutches of the Angel of Death, O Zail Singh! Come and rescue me".

Forgetting God, O man, what horrendous deeds have you done? Arrogance is not acceptable to God, O man, what have you done?

On 6 June, 1984, Indra Gandhi ordered an attack on Sri Harmandar Sahib Ji. Thousands of innocent Sikh men and women were martyred. The Government said that the invasion took place because Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was occupying Sri Harmandar Sahib Ji. But why were other Gurdwaras within and outside Punjab attacked? For example, Gurdwara Mukatsar Sahib, Sri Dookh Niwaran Sahib, Patiala, Gurdwara Bhattha Sahib Ji, Ropar, and many other Gurdwaras were invaded. Over ten thousand Sikhs were accused of being extremists and arrested. That Indra Gandhi was killed by the Sikhs who had suffered so much cruelty and oppression, is understandable. Only two Sikhs killed her, but what was the crime of the Sikhs in and around Delhi? Anyone seen wearing a steel bangle (*Kara*, one of the Sikh articles of faith), was killed mercilessly. The cars and taxis of the Sikhs were set on fire. The Sikhs were soaked with petrol and burnt alive. The houses were set on fire. The judge who was in charge of investigations did not make any attempt to console the aggrieved Sikhs. Such tyranny did not take place even when Mahatma Gandhi was shot by Nathuram Godse, as was unleashed on the Sikhs after Indra Gandhi's death. This is because Nathu Ram was a Hindu. Under these conditions, how long can this regime last? So much persecution is going on in this rule, which has simply abandoned truth.

The 300th anniversary of the martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, the defender of India's honour, was celebrated jointly by all in 1975. Guru Ji sacrificed his own life to save the faith of the Hindus. The people of India just shrugged off the magnitude of this supreme sacrifice. Guru Ji saved the religion of the Hindus. But, in return, the Government of India attempted to wipe out the Sikh faith.

If The Sikhs Had Their Own Rule

The Sikhs would not have suffered this cruelty, if they had their own rule,
This tyranny would not have taken place, if they had their own rule.

The Sikhs suffered oppression, the world kept silent.

Bullets showered on Harmandar, the world kept silent.

A dreadful storm blew over Delhi on 31 November.

Wayfaring Sikhs were caught and burnt in fire.

The Sikhs would not have suffered this cruelty, if they had their own rule,

This tyranny would not have taken place, if they had their own rule.

The Sikhs were offered own rule, which Tara Singh rejected.

"What shall we do separated?" he accepted living together.

Tara Singh the ascetic, who renounced own sovereignty.

When he came to his senses, then he asked for Punjabi Suba.

The Sikhs would not have suffered this cruelty, if they had their own rule,

This tyranny would not have taken place, if they had their own rule. Nehru spoke, "Listen Tara Singh, listen to me with intent.

The whites offered you self-rule, then why did you say "no"?

Now you do not need a *suba* (state within India), don't bother me.

You are not fit to rule, that is why you said "no"

The Sikhs would not have suffered this cruelty, if they had their own rule,

This tyranny would not have taken place, if they had their own rule.

"I shall die for the (Sikh) nation, if (you) say "no" to a *suba*".

When Nehru said "no", he went on fast.

The cunning Nehru spoke to Tara Singh's daughter, "Listen daughter, do something for me.

Break the fast of your father by feeding him secretly."

The Sikhs would not have suffered this cruelty, if they had their own rule,

This tyranny would not have taken place, if they had their own rule.

Now Fateh Singh, with enthusiasm, asked for Punjabi Suba.

"If I do not get the Suba, then in fire shall I burn myself."

Action is more difficult than words, so why make such promises?

Fasting unto death, burning in fire, Gurmatt forbids these.

The Sikhs would not have suffered this cruelty, if they had their own rule,

This tyranny would not have taken place, if they had their own rule.

The Signs of Khalsa Raj

"No one knows the state of the Lord. The Yogis, the celibates, the austere penitents, and all sorts of clever people have failed. || 1 || Pause || In an instant, He changes the beggar into a king, and the king into a beggar. He fills what is empty, and empties what is full. Such are His ways. || 1 || He Himself spread out the expanse of His *Maya*, and He Himself beholds it. He assumes so many forms, and plays so many games, and yet He remains distinct and detached from it all. || 2 || Incalculable, infinite, incomprehensible and immaculate, He has mystified the whole world. So give up all your doubts; prays Nanak, O mortal, focus your consciousness on His Feet. || 3 ||" (SGGS p. 537)

"From the earth, the mortal is exalted to the skies; and from the skies, he is thrown down. || 2 || The beggar is transformed into a king, and the king into a beggar. The idiotic fool is transformed into a Pandit, a religious scholar, and the Pandit into a fool. || 3 || The woman is transformed into a man, and the men into women. Says Kabir, God is the Beloved of the Holy Saints. I am a sacrifice unto His image." (SGGS p. 1252)

On 6 June, 1984, the Government of India invaded the holy premises of Sri Harmandar Sahib Ji. This was the day of the Gurburab commemorating the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. In this invasion, a large number of Sikh men, women and children were killed. As the news spread, the deeply shocked world Sikh community, held massive demonstrations in protest. When I heard this news, my grief was great. I kept thinking of the death of so many Singhs, Singhanis (women Sikhs) and children. Instead of getting their own rule (as promised by the Congress leaders), even their basic demands were not met. I thought, "The Singhs have made countless sacrifices, why is Guru Ji not giving His Khalsa their own rule? Now they have suffered such atrocities. A bullet hit even the holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (in *Prakaash* at the *santum sanctorum*, Harmandar Sahib). The bullet pierced the Holy Scriptures up to the Gurbani of Sukhmani Sahib (at page 262)." I was so grieved and frustrated that I could not sleep for most of that night. My sorrow cannot be described. However, when my eyes did close, as if to console me a *Shaheed* Singh appeared. He said that I should not be so frustrated. He said, "Only the true Khalsa is qualified to rule, but today's Khalsa is not the true Khalsa. Only the Guru of the Khalsa can give what is needed. What can you beg from those who are beggars themselves? The Khalsa is so feeble spiritually that they have forgotten from whom to ask for favours. Khalsa is the ruler of millions of galaxies. It is within the Will of Guru Ji to turn dust to gold in a second. However; the Panth does not have faith in the Word of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji:

"Whatever I ask for from my Lord and Master, he gives that to me. Whatever the Lord's slave Nanak utters with his mouth, proves to be true, here and hereafter. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 681)

So the *Shaheed* Singh spoke, "The ancient Singhs had complete faith in the Guru and one such was Bhai Bidhi Chand. One day a Sikh came and performed *matha tekan* before the Sovereign of both worlds, Sri Guru Har Gobind Ji. He offered an expensive shawl to Guru Ji and prayed, "O True King! The Guardian of the two worlds (the seen and the unseen), I was bringing two more shawls like this one. The local governor threatened me and took them away." Guru Ji was touched by the Sikh's affection and told Bhai Bidhi Chand to bring the shawls back. Bhai Bidhi Chand said, "As you wish O True King." He disguised himself and went inside the Pathan governor's house. Only the servant women and the wives of the Pathan were around. Bhai Bidhi Chand told them to bring

forth the shawls and the frightened women did as they were told. However, as he got out of the house they raised the alarm and the gates of the town were closed.

Bhai Bidhi Chand moved away from the house while thinking of some way to escape. Aware of the grave danger he meditated on the Guru's *charan* (holy feet) and jumped into a large burning oven! In deep meditation, he recited:

"The hot wind does not even touch one who is under the Protection of the Supreme Lord God. On all four sides I am surrounded by the Lord's Circle of Protection; pain does not afflict me, O brothers. || 1 || I have met the Perfect True Guru, who has done this deed. He has given me the medicine of the Lord's Name, and I enshrine love for the One Lord. || 1 || Pause || The Saviour Lord has saved me, and eradicated all my sickness. Says Nanak, God has showered me with His Mercy; He has become my help and support. || 2 ||"
(SGGS p. 819)

"Where You are, Almighty Lord, there is no one else. There, in the fire of the mother's womb, You protected us."
(SGGS p. 962)

"Reciting these *Shabads*, this great warrior-saint, sat in the burning oven, with his mind set on the Guru's ever-protecting presence.

"At that very time, the Sovereign of *Miri-Piri* (worldly and spiritual realms), was sitting with a large *Sangat*. As He heard Bhai Bidhi Chand's prayer, he asked for containers of water to be brought and poured over His own body. And so the true Sikh of the Guru was saved from the fire while the guards of the Pathan searched for him in vain. Rain came and put out the fire and Bhai Bidhi Chand disappeared in the middle of the night. He reached Sri Amritsar, placed the two shawls before the Guru and touched His holy *charan* (feet) in deep reverence. The *Sangat* was amazed, that Guru Ji had asked for so much water to be poured over Himself. To clarify the mystery, Guru Ji told Bhai Bidhi Chand, "Look at the pain I had to suffer for you." Guru Ji's body was covered with blisters, for He had Himself suffered the heat which Bhai Bidhi Chand would have felt when sitting in the hot oven. That also explained the water which was being poured on Him. The Guru takes upon Himself the suffering of His true devotees like Bhai Bidhi Chand. The *Satguru* looks after anyone who has total faith in the Guru and who never allows his mind to waver."

The *Shaheed* Singh said, "The whole country would suffer as a result of the cruelty at Amritsar. God's Will is all powerful:

"No one knows the state of the Lord. The Yogis, the celibates, the austere penitents, and all sorts of clever people have failed. || 1 || Pause || In an instant, He changes the beggar into a king, and the king into a beggar. He fills what is empty, and empties what is full. Such are His ways. || 1 ||"
(SGGS p. 537)

"Punjab will suffer great losses. There is a dark cloud over Punjab because the Punjabis have not followed the teachings of Sri Guru Granth sahib Ji. They have faltered from the path of truth and sided with falsehood. The harvest of sin will be first reaped by Punjab, then by the rest of India."

Whosoever clashed with an avtaar (a divine person - God incarnate according to the Hindu tradition, to which Sikhism does not subscribe) was destroyed. For example, in *Satyug* (first part of

the time span of this universe) the *rakshshas* (demons) clashed with Vishnu and were destroyed. In the age of *Treta*, the demon king Rawan clashed with Ram Chandar Ji and met his end. In the *Duapar* age, the Kaurav princes, led by Daryodhan waged an unjust war on the righteous Pandav brothers (who were backed by Krishan Bhagwan) and the Kauravs were destroyed (in the Hindu Vedic tradition, the age of the universe is divided into four unequal parts called Yug. The four Yug are Satyug, Treta, Duapar, and Kalyug in that order. They represent the descending of righteous and truthful conduct. The present is the last Yug i.e. Kalyug, variously called the age of fire, falsehood and darkness. It is ruled by the goddess Kali, the goddess of war, rage and destruction. Despite the underlying Vedic idiom used for illustrative purposes, Sikhism does not subscribe to these views. The symptoms associated with the four Yugs, can exist at the same time according to one's mental state, company (*sangat*) and conduct).

The *avtar* (i.e. the symbol of righteous conduct) of Kalyug is Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The Tenth Light (of Guru Nanak Dev Ji), Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji proclaimed Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to be the Guru of all ages. The government of India clashed with Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and its rule shall be destroyed; for truth is always victorious.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji has made it clear that:

"*Rehat* (the prescribed Sikh way of life) is dear to me and not a Sikh."

Few have followed this injunction. The Sikhs have stopped rising early in the morning to recite Gurbani and they do not have full faith in their Guru. So many weaknesses have crept into the Sikhs that they have abandoned truth and prefer falsehood. They hate each other. They give up Amrit and drink alcohol. They have built Gurdwaras named after castes; they no longer live in harmony and have entered the rat race of wealth. Today the Sikhs follow anyone while they should be following the guidance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji only. Khalsa means "pure"; Khalsa represents truth and Khalsa faith is the faith of truth. Until such time as a Sikh does not give up falsehood, does not keep *rehat* of the Guru, does not rise early in the morning and do *simran* and recite Bani, he is not qualified for self rule. Satguru Ji says in this Shabad: -

"One who calls himself a Sikh of the Guru, the True Guru, shall rise in the early morning hours and meditate on the Lord's Name. Upon arising early in the morning, he is to bathe, and cleanse himself in the pool of nectar. Following the Instructions of the Guru, he is to chant the Name of the Lord. All sins, misdeeds and negativity shall be erased. Then, at the rising of the sun, he is to sing Gurbani; whether sitting down or standing up, he is to meditate on the Lord's Name. One who meditates on my Lord with every breath and every morsel of food, that Gursikh becomes pleasing to the Guru's Mind. That person, unto whom my Lord and Master is kind and compassionate, upon that Gursikh, the Guru's Teachings are bestowed. Servant Nanak begs for the dust of the feet of that Gursikh, who himself chants the Naam, and inspires others to chant it. || 2 ||"
(SGGS p. 305)

The *Shaheed* Singh revealed to me:

"Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji will show the *Panj Piaray* where the treasure of the Khalsa lies. With that treasure Punjab will be developed into a new age paradise. The Khalsa will make an underground passage from Amritsar to Delhi in which hundreds of thousands of Singhs will sit and do *simran*. Flowers will be planted on both sides of this underground passage and there will be settlements on both sides also. The fragrance of the flowers will drift into the underground chambers in the

passage. In the morning from three to four *simran* will be done. From four to five "Waheguru" *dhuni* (musical rhythm) will be sung. In this heavenly place followers of other religions will be welcome to do *simran*. Gold coins will be used in Khalsa Raj (rule). Sri Harmandar Sahib will be decorated with diamonds. The weather in Khalsa Raj will remain constant as spring weather. There will be clean and caring hospitals. The Khalsa shall number 960 million and there will be Khalsa embassies in other countries to spread the Khalsa message. In Khalsa Raj people will live longer. There will be no shortage of milk or butter. Such stones will be brought up from the land around Anandpur, that they will radiate light in darkness. The Khalsa will pay for water and electricity. Another dam and a canal will be constructed. Women will enjoy complete equality with men. There will be marriages between Indian and white races. The dress will be blue and white and it will be worn at the Gurburabs, which will be celebrated with great splendour. Beautiful places will be constructed and there will be numerous parks for children to play in. Individuals will need to work only four hours a day. There will be educational and spiritually beneficial programmes on the television. The remaining time will be spent in blissful *Naam simran*."

I asked the *Shaheed* Singh: "How will the age of the Khalsa be prolonged?"

Shaheed Singh: There is a place in Ecuador where people live from 150-200 years. These people drink the water of a river. There is a certain stone in the river which affects the water so that by drinking this water people breathe more slowly when sleeping. For this reason their life is prolonged. Similar stones will be found below the surface in the land around Anandpur, but only when the Khalsa follows the *Rehat Maryada* (prescribed Khalsa code). When the Khalistan villages are developed, they will have *sarovars* (water tanks). By drinking the water from these *sarovars* and due to the spiritual power of *Naam simran* the lives of the Khalsa will be prolonged. At night the stones will warm the water of the *sarovars* steam clouds will form and there will be rain every night. It will be spring weather all through the year. Flowers will bloom always. There will be no autumn and the weather will remain constant; not too cold and not too hot. The meditative power of *simran* will ease the passage to *Sachkhand* (the Plain of Truth or God's Abode) after this life.

I asked: "How will gold coinage become the common currency in Khalsa Raj?"

Shaheed Singh: "Every *avtaar* has the power of *Kaamdhen* (Divine power to grant material wishes) which can be used at any time (*Kaamdhen* is the Hindu name for a mythological heavenly cow capable of granting any boon).

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji wishes to use this power for the glory of the Khalsa. No regime will compare with Khalsa Raj in which gold currency is Guru Ji's desire. The treasure buried by Guru Ji is going to be used for the Khalsa Raj. Such is the Guru's Will that this wealth will not be exhausted. The wealth of *Naam* earned by the saints and high souls is inexhaustible. How can the treasure buried by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji with His own hands be ever spent? Khalsa is the owner of billions of galaxies. The whole land of Punjab can be converted to gold if the Guru so wishes. The Khalsa will be without any impurity. These days, many children of Gursikhs arrive in this world with the Name of *Pramatma* (God) engraved on their hearts.

"Nowadays, the souls which *Pramatma* is sending to this earth are already immersed in His Name. Due to their *Naam simran*, the next generation will be qualified for Khalsa Raj. The next generation will keep full *Rehat Maryada* (prescribed Khalsa code). The children will do *Naam simaran* and *Gurbani kirtan*. Guru Ji proclaims in the following *Shabad*:-

"Only that person can be called Khalsa true In whose heart there is no superstition."
(From Sainapatt's work "*Gur Sobha*")

"Khalsa is my identity true.
I reside with the Khalsa."
(*Sarab Loh Granth*)

Guru Ji says that the Khalsa is in His Own Image.
Khalsa shall not steal. Khalsa shall not speak evil of others.
Khalsa shall be the devotee of One (Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) only
Khalsa shall always speak the truth, never tell lies.
Khalsa shall have one caste only; the high and the low shall become equal.
Khalsa shall have one *Langar* (eat from one kitchen).
Khalsa shall not go near another's woman.
Khalsa shall not take bribery.
The soul of the Khalsa shall be so pure (non attached), that he will regard gold and diamonds as dirt.

"Khalsa means pure, without impurity, true; and Khalsa faith is the faith of truth.

The Khalsa are not qualified to rule until they denounce falsehood, remain true to their *rehat*, and rise early in the morning to do *Naam simran*.

"Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji has conferred *raj* (own rule) on the Khalsa, but when Khalsa accepts and adopts the complete *Rehat Maryada* (full code of the Khalsa internal and external discipline).

"The whole Universe serves You, day and night. Please hear my prayer, O Dear Lord. I have thoroughly tested and seen all, You alone, by Your Pleasure, can save us. || 12 || Now, the Merciful Lord has issued His Command. Let no one chase after and attack anyone else. Let all abide in peace, under this Benevolent Rule. || 13 || Softly and gently, drop by drop, the Ambrosial Nectar trickles down. I speak as my Lord and Master causes me to speak. I place all my faith in You; please accept me. || 14 || Your devotees are forever hungry for You. O Lord, please fulfil my desires. Grant me the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan, O Giver of Peace. Please, take me into Your Embrace. || 15 || I have not found any other as Great as You. You pervade the continents, the worlds and the nether regions; You are permeating all places and interspaces. Nanak: You are the True Support of Your devotees. || 16 ||" (SGGS p. 74)

"Due to *Naam simran* by Gursikhs, the land of Punjab shall become a part of *Sach Khand* (the Plain of Truth, where Waheguru dwells). The power of *simran* will bring people closer to the Sach Khand. In the Khalsa Raj, Harmandar Sahib will be decorated with diamonds."

I asked: "Where would the diamonds come from?"

Shaheed Singh said: "Bahadur Shah prayed to Guru Ji to help him and get him the throne (of India). Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji said, "I shall help you, if, when you become the emperor, you present before me the one who martyred my two younger sons (Guru Ji is referring to the evil Nawab of Sarhind who backed alive the two younger Sahibzaday Baba Fateh Singh Ji and Baba Jorawar Singh Ji)." Bahadur Shah agreed. However when he got his kingdom he started wondering how to satisfy Guru Ji. If he delivered the Nawab, the Muslims would turn against him. So he tried (indirectly) to

bribe Guru Ji! He presented a diamond to Guru Ji and the all knowing Guru Ji knew what was in the Emperor's mind.

"Guru Ji was sitting near River Godawri and threw the diamond into the river. Bahadur Shah was taken aback and asked, "This diamond was very expensive. Why have you thrown it into the river?" Guru Ji said, "If it is so expensive then go and get it out." When the King looked for the diamond he saw thousands of similar diamonds in the Godavri. He was amazed to see so many diamonds.

"These diamonds will one day decorate Sri Harmandar Sahib." Guru Ji said to Bahadur Shah, "You have broken your promise. I shall send my own Sikh to punish the Nawab." Guru Ji then gave Banda Singh Bahadur five arrows and sent him to Punjab. Banda Singh Bahadur exacted the revenge for the martyrdom of the young *Sahibjadas* (princes) and razed the city to the ground."

I asked humbly, "Would I be able to see Khalsa Raj with my own eyes?"

Shaheed Singh replied, "Now your mind is set on seeing Khalsa Raj; you may be able to see it, but you will have to do 13 or 14 hours *simran* a day. When you receive Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's blessing, the Guru Himself will help you to do *Naam simran* and give you the will to do the early morning *simran*.

With you the other *Sangat* will benefit also. By doing *simran* in *Saadh Sangat*, the quality of your life will improve. As a result you would be able to see Khalsa Raj.

"Those Gursikhs who do *simran* in the morning will establish the Khalsa Raj when they are born again. By running the Khalsa administration (as *sewadars*), they will achieve salvation, for their effort will be great. Their *simran* will be so intense and true that:

"Inspired by devotion, and awake to the Light; Never forgetting, even for a moment, the singing of the Name of the Lord. Having faith only in the Lord, absorbed in His Splendour, absorbed in His Love; never believing in fasts and tombs, temples or idols. Not for penances nor bathing at holy places, nor for the Yogis' self-maceration; not in anything but devotion to the One. These things mean nothing, if God's Light is not in you. When one's inner self is thoroughly illuminated with the Celestial Light; Only then can one truly be considered as Khalsa." (*Sarab Loh Granth*)

The *Shaheed Singh* continued, "Such is the reward of *simran* in the early morning, that if a hundred Gursikhs sit together in the holy presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and do *simran* for one hour, then each Gursikh will receive the benefit of one hundred hours of *simran*."

"Just as Dhroo and Prahlada meditated on the Lord, so should you meditate on the Lord, O my soul." (SGGS p. 337)

"Gurbani shows that Bhagats, Dhru and Prahlada, became immortal through *simran*.

Dhru Bhagat was given his kingdom by meditating on God's Name all by himself. With you, a large number of *Sangat* will do *Naam Simran*. Through the power of *simran*, Khalsa Raj will be achieved." After saying these words, the *Shaheed Singh* disappeared.

Weakness of the Panthic Leaders

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, President of the Akali Dal, and Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the President of the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee betrayed their faith. They promised, that if the Indian government invaded Sri Harmandar Sahib, then it will be over their dead bodies.

When Indra Gandhi ordered the invasion of Sri Harmandar Sahib, Longowal, Tohra, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwalay and a large number of the *Sangat* were inside. A large number of devotees had arrived from outside due to Guru Arjan Dev Ji's *Shaheedee* (martyrdom) Gurpurab that day. In the *Sangat* were little children. The army killed large numbers of innocent *Sangat*. Sant Longowal and Tohra saw this horrifying act with their own eyes. However, they did not keep in mind that: -

"He alone is known as a (true) warrior, who fights in defence of the defenceless (the poor). He may be cut to pieces, but he never leaves the field of battle. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 1105)

They did not remember the above quotation from Gurbani. They did not remember the young *Sahibzaaday* (Princes of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji) aged 7 and 9 years, who were martyred at Sirhind. They did not think of those little children killed right in front of their eyes. Despite their mature years they saved their own lives and ran away. They had only that much love for *Sikhi* (Sikh faith). Sant Longowal was not even married, he did not have a family, but still he saved his own life and ran away. What was he so attached to? He died as a traitor of the Guru. If he had died facing the invaders, he would have been counted as a martyr like the other Singhs.

When the Panth becomes weak, *Paramatma* (Waheguru) sends some righteous person. Sant Jarnail Singh awakened a sleeping nation. The Sant had predicted that the day Sri Harmandar Sahib is attacked, the foundation of Khalistan would have been laid.

"As The (Provocative) Arrow Struck So Was Roused The Spirit Of Righteous Anger"

(Guru Gobind Singh Ji)

Many set out to destroy the Sikh nation, especially these four tried their level best: Mir Mannu, Lakhpat Rai, Indra Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. But all four of them perished in the attempt.

"The Will of God hath ordained the Order of the Khalsa Panth This is the final Commandment to all the Sikhs, accept the Granth as the Guru."

(*Sikh Ardaas and Rehatnama*)

The Panth was inaugurated by the order of *Akal Purakh* (Waheguru); who else can destroy it? Indra Gandhi succeeded in creating Bangladesh. (Thus, she was successful in destroying the larger Pakistan which included Bangladesh as East Pakistan.) She thought there are only a few Singhs, why not finish them off as well. That will boost my power and prestige even more. The arrest of Sant Jarnail Singh was only an excuse. She had decided to destroy the Sikhs. She was arrogant due to the strength of her army, planes and tanks and thought that the Sikhs could be converted to Hinduism with ease. With such intent, she ordered the invasion of Sri Harmandar Sahib on 6 June, 1984, on the Martyrdom (*Shaheedi*) Gurburab of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. In remembrance of this day, a large number of Sangat, including the elderly, women and children had come from many villages and towns near and far. Suddenly the attack was ordered. The *Sangat* were innocent but were sprayed with bullets. At that time Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was in *Prakaash* (open for Sangat's *darshan*). A bullet struck "Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji" in the sense that it pierced Sri Guru Granth Sahib at page 262 from where starts Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji's *Sukhmani Sahib*. "The Guru is awake".

"As the arrow struck, so awakened the spirit of righteous anger." (Guru Gobind Singh Ji)

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the *Avtar* (Divine Presence in the world) of this Age of *Kalyug*. Whosoever showed enmity towards an *avtar*, lost everything. India will suffer the same fate. Truth remained in hiding. No one protested against the atrocities committed. Except for the Sikhs themselves, no one else raised a voice to say, "You have done wrong!" Although, there are many spiritual leaders in India, but even they were frightened to speak the truth. There is but one Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji who said bluntly to Babar (the invading Mughal), "You are not Babar but a tyrant. You will have to account for your evil deeds." Anyone who is cruel has to account for his cruelty. Anyone who steals or murders someone is safe only for a short time, while the judge is considering the verdict. Once the punishment is pronounced, then the person regrets the evil deeds done. The whole country will have to pay for the invasion ordered by Indra Gandhi. Punjab will be punished also because Punjab did not stand on truth. Except for the Sikhs themselves, no other Punjabi protested. That there was so much loss (of life and heritage) at such a sacred place and any inhabitant of Punjab, regardless of own religion, should not speak out against it and say "this is wrong"? None belonging to other faiths said, "You have done wrong". The harvest of this evil will be reaped by Punjab and the whole of India. Those who were later martyred by the Punjab government will take birth again and punish the perpetrators of these crimes.

Attacks On Harmandar Sahib Ji

To destroy the Sikhs, the Muslims fought many wars but did not succeed. They found out that the energies of the Sikhs were being continually renewed by some divine power in the waters of the *Sarowar* (holy water tank around the Golden Temple) at Sri Harmandar Sahib. So they thought of filling up the *Sarowar*.

In 1762, Ahmad Shah Abdali destroyed the building of Harmandar Sahib with cannon fire and filled up the holy *Sarowar*. He also pulled down the surrounding buildings and structures. He supervised all this in person. Some good people advised him that this House of God should not be destroyed, but Abdali ignored it. He was saying, "This is the source of the power of the Sikhs; this is the water of immortality; I am determined to stop this spring from flowing." At that time it so happened, that as the cannons were firing, a piece of brick flew off and hit Abdali's nose. The wound did not heal until his death. When the Sikhs heard of the destruction of Sri Harmandar Sahib, they started marching towards the holy city. They numbered only about five thousand. However, as they marched on, shouting their *Jaikara* (battle-cry), thousands of young patriots joined them on the way. These were the young Sikhs prepared to die for the Sikh cause. As the Singhs reached Sri Darbar Sahib they camped near the Sarowar and challenged Ahmad Shah Abdali to the battlefield. The two armies clashed between Lahore and Amritsar and the army of Ahmad Shah Abdali suffered a resounding defeat. He retreated in the darkness of the night to Lahore leaving the Singhs victorious in the field.

In 1984, the Indian government did its level best, but who can destroy this sacred place? Akal Purakh Himself founded Harmandar Sahib. The holiness of this place has been recognised through the ages. It is the land of great sages, the *rishis* and *munis*, who meditated here for thousands of years. They contemplated and uttered the great Vedic literature here. When Sri Ram Chandar and Lachhman fought Lav and Kush, the latter were knocked unconscious and were barely alive. They were revived by the water of immortality (*Amrit*) of this place. This is that sacred place where the husband of princess Rajni recovered from leprosy after taking a bath. Today also, a bath in the Sarowar is given a very special significance. Guru Ji Himself praised this place, that there is none other like it.

"I have seen all places, but none can compare to You. The Primal Lord, the Architect of Destiny, has established You; thus You are adorned and embellished. Ramdaspur is prosperous and thickly populated, and incomparably beautiful. O Lord! Bathing in the Sacred Pool of Ram Das, the residues of sins are washed away, O Nanak. || 10 ||" (SGGS p. 1362)

Lepers and those unwell are cured after taking a bath in this *Sarowar*.

"Bathing in the nectar tank of Ram Das, the residues of all sins are erased. One becomes immaculately pure, taking this cleansing bath. The Perfect Guru has bestowed this gift. || 1 || God has blessed all with peace and pleasure. Everything is safe and sound, as we contemplate the Word of the Guru's Shabad. || Pause || In the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, filth is washed off. The Supreme Lord God has become our friend and helper. Nanak meditates on the Naam, the Name of the Lord. He has found God, the Primal Being. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 625)

So, no one can destroy this sacred place.

Propagation Of Own Religion

"The Baba (Guru Nanak Dev Ji) is worshipped in every home regardless of the people's Hindu or Muslim (religious) difference." (Bhai Gurdas)

Everyone loves ones own religion. All try to spread the word of their own religion. For example, the Muslims spread their religion through the force of arms. The Hindus were forced to accept Islam and many people became Muslims through fear. The Christians used charity and service to spread their religion; they help out wherever there is a need. If there is an earthquake somewhere or there is disease, they go to the help of the victims. Whatever is needed they provide. They help the poor. In this way people accept Christianity willingly. The Hindu religion is the easiest to adopt for they worship anything or anyone. For this reason, their number has increased. The Sikh religion is the path of love and it will spread through truthful conduct and the spiritual power of *Naam* (awareness of God Being). Everyone is searching for happiness. However: -

"There is no peace without devotional worship of the Lord. Be victorious, and win the priceless jewel of this human life, by meditating on Him in the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, even for an instant. || 1 || Pause || Many have renounced and left their children, wealth, spouses, joyful games and pleasures. || 1 || Horses, elephants and the pleasures of power — leaving these behind, the fool must depart naked. || 2 || The body, scented with musk and sandalwood — that body shall come to roll in the dust. || 3 || Infatuated with emotional attachment, they think that God is far away. Says Nanak, he is Ever-present! || 4 ||"
(SGGS p. 210)

Guru Nanak Dev Ji has shown a direct and simple path to God's Name (i.e. God realisation). Do *Naam simran*; honest work and share your earnings with others. This is the Guru Ji's injunction.

"O Nanak, meeting the True Guru, one comes to know the Perfect Way. While laughing, playing, dressing and eating, one is liberated.
|| 2 || (SGGS p. 522)

The Sikh religion has prospered through the divine power of *Naam* and so it will keep on spreading. For example, Harbhajan Singh Ji *Yogi* (Bhai Sahib Bhai Harbhajan Singh is popularly addressed as *Yogi Ji* which, due to its ascetic connotation, may be regarded by some as a misleading description of his true mission in the *Sikhi* context) has brought over a hundred thousand Americans and Europeans into the fold of Sikhism, and they follow the Sikh *Rehat Maryada* (religious code).

Following the Bhai Sahib Ji's example, if similar *parchaar* (preaching) is done by the orders of the *Panth* (Khalsa Nation), then the prophecy of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji of 960 million Khalsa will be fulfilled and Khalsa Raj will be established soon. Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji preached *Naam simran*, honest work and sharing with others and opened up vegetarian hotels in the large cities of America, Asia and Europe. Sikh religious literature is distributed at these hotels. When the customers come, they also receive advice about health giving yoga exercises; information is given out about the Sikh religion that for peace of mind the recitation of *Gurbani* is helpful. The white followers are well educated and follow the advice of their leader. Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji brought thousands into the fold of the Sikh religion. All Singhs and *Singhanis* (lady Sikhs) accept his guidance. He formed small *Jathas* (groups) headed by a leading *sewadar* (one who gives guidance

in doing *sewa* by own example). All follow the lead of the leading *sewadar*. Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji has taken this initiative to spread the Sikh religion, but the spiritual power is that of the recitation of *Mool Mantar* (see Glossary).

The spread of religion has been through the miracle of *Naam* and this process will continue. It may be that Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji may have incurred a loss himself but he has certainly promoted the Sikh religion (This would be a reference to spiritual "loss". Elsewhere Bhai Rama Singh Ji explains how spiritual loss can be incurred if one goes around talking about own spiritual attainment, even though this may sometimes be done to persuade others to come to the right path).

The children born in Sikh families have drifted away from religion. They have no love for *Sikhi* at heart. They abide by their parents' wishes and go to the Gurdwara for *matha tekan*, but otherwise they have no knowledge of the great spiritual power of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. They regard Guru Ji just as another book. Only if they could read Punjabi would they gain knowledge of *Bani*. This is the unfortunate attitude of the children born into the Sikh faith.

With the spiritual power (and appeal) of the *Mool Mantar*, Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji converted about a hundred thousand to *Sikhi* from other faiths. They had no knowledge of the Sikh religion. They ate meat and drank alcohol. Once they realised that these are forbidden in the Sikh religion they accepted the Guru's injunction and abstained from both. Then they realised that Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji loved the Sikh *rehat*, accordingly, they started keeping *rehat* - the full Khalsa identity and inner and outer disciplines prescribed by Guru Ji. They fully practise whatever is dear to the Guru. They wear the full dress of the Khalsa. All Singh and Singhanis wear the small *dastar* (small turban called the *keski*).

Bhai Sahib Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji now goes to India to preach *Sikhi* as well. He is planning to send ten thousand white Singhs and Singhanis to India who will go from village to village preaching the Sikh faith (those in the West, inspired by Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji's yogic exercises combined with *Naam simran*, have now become scholars of mainstream Sikhi in their own right. Bhai Sahib's initiative is therefore highly commendable).

Bhai Sahib Ji has done what we have been unable to do. How many people have we been able to convert from other faiths? (Elsewhere, it has been mentioned that Sikhi, if properly preached and practised in accordance with Guru Ji's injunctions, should attract followers. Otherwise Sikh religion is a religion of love and tolerance and respects other religious paths also. So, the word "convert" should be interpreted in this context. Sikhism is not a proselytising religion).

We have seen, that while we are having difficulty teaching *Sikhi* to our own children, Bhai Sahib is converting those from other faiths to the Sikh religion (Yet, it needs to be noted that Sikhism is not a proselytising religion).

Bairag (Spiritual longing)

(Editor's note: "*Bairag*" or "*Vairag*" means deep sorrow; and in the spiritual sense it is also the longing and sadness one feels at the separation of the lonely soul from the Ultimate Truth, the Waheguru, the Lord of Creation. *Bairag* in the latter case is a sure sign of a soul (*alma*) looking for its counter part the Supreme Soul (*Param-atma*). This type of *bairag* is a most fortunate sign in this human life. There is a certain purity attaching to this word in Gurbani which is not readily conveyed in another language medium. Therefore, like many other Gurbani words, this word has sometimes been used without translation in this chapter.)

If a family member departs then, quite naturally, the memory of that person makes one very sad. The memory of the departed person is ever present at home when one is moving about thinking that the departed person used to sit or move around here and there, and all the family was together. If a person is in love with another, then the more the closeness the greater the attachment.

I met a young man at Singapore. He said to me, "Baba Ji I am very much struck by *bairag*". Thinking of the spiritual *bairag*, I was pleased to hear this and said, "You are most fortunate. It is only with good fortune that one feels that way." He replied, "No Baba Ji, I have fallen in love with a girl. I think of her all the time. I do not like anything else. I cannot live without seeing her. She has left me. She has broken her engagement with me and said our paths are different. I cannot live without her, please pray for me." I said, "If you have a desire to look for Waheguru, then I shall certainly pray for you. But I do not pray for worldly desires." I asked him to develop true affection with Waheguru Who will help and protect in the end

Bairag (of the human soul) for meeting the Supreme Soul

"I cannot survive without seeing my Beloved. My eyes are welling up with tears."
(SGGS p. 94)

God resides in all living creatures, but is not seen. It is very difficult to develop true love for God. Those who meditate on God, their souls are illuminated by His Light. As Gurbani says:-

"I have seized the Unseen and Unfathomable Lord, through the Word of the Guru's Shabad. I am a sacrifice to the True Guru. I place my head in offering before the True Guru, if it truly pleases the True Guru. Take pity on me, O God, Great Giver, that Nanak may merge in Your Being."
(SGGS p. 1114)

First their souls are purified through meditation. Then they begin to develop *bairag* - the soul begins to become sad and longs for union with the Universal Soul. Due to this *bairag* the sins of many previous life cycles are washed away. Salvation is achieved due to this *bairag* and God absorbs the God-centred soul.

Mantar (Magical Charms and Spells)

Some people practice recitation of *mantar* to overpower elements, spirits or life forms. For example, by reciting black *mantar* (formula for black magic) they try to enslave ghosts and other spirits to inflict suffering on others. They find it easier to give money to some practitioner of black magic to destroy or hurt the family of someone they do not like. Some lose their lives. This is all too common today.

(A)

Once three ladies came to me and asked me to do *Ardaas* (standing prayer) for one of them. She was suffering from ill health. I asked the lady concerned what was wrong with her. Her sister told her most unhappy experience. That she was married in India. The boy went from England and he liked the girl. He married her and brought her back with him. The couple had a baby girl. Her mother-in-law made life hell for her. She was getting weaker day by day. The symptoms were as if she were under some sort of black magic spell. She would see something at night and run out of the house.

In this same way many families are unhappy. I advised the lady who was ill, "Recite the *Paatth* of *Mool Mantar*. Nothing afflicts a person who meditates on Waheguru's Name. Those who indulge in such practices suffer themselves and make others unhappy also. Those who believe in and practise black *mantars* go through much pain and suffering. They go through the Chaurasi Lakh (8.4 million) life cycles. In *Gurmatt* (Guru's guidance), all this is *manmatt* i.e. beliefs and behaviour which leads one away from God-centeredness. One who uses these *mantars* has to suffer punishment three times: once each, for the one who gave the *mantar*, the medium who used it and for the one who was inflicted with it. All this will have to be suffered by the one who arranged it i.e. your mother-in-law."

O human being! How cruel can you be for the sake of a few days of material comfort. Before you inflict cruelty on others, you should pause and reflect, that you will have to suffer three times the punishment for indulging in black *mantars*.

Magic Spells

(B)

One day two young men came to my house. One said, "I am not well and my family think I am out of my mind. I keep worrying and do not feel like doing anything. My wife and I quarrel with each other. My head is heavy. There is something in my mind which says, "Go and cut your hair, if you remain a Sikh, I shall kill you." I explained to him that life and death is in the hands of God; no one can kill another.

"One whose Lord is All-powerful, no one can destroy him."
(SGGS p. 842)

"Go to the Gurdwara and do *sewa* of the *Sangat*." I advised.

He started wearing a *dastar* (turban) and going to the Gurdwara. His affliction became less. Then he went away for two or three weeks and the voice returned and told him, that if he did not cut his hair then he would die by December, 1995. He came back to me and said, "I am very

frightened." I told him, "When you see or hear this thing then recite "Waheguru, Waheguru" *simran* loudly."

With Guru Ji's Grace, the year 1996 arrived; he was very much encouraged that the evil influence troubling him could not harm him. He began to have such faith in *simran* that he asked for Guru's blessing so that he could be ready to take *Amrit*.

Gurmantar

(Guru's Sacred Formula)

Gurmantar: "The *Mantar* of the Guru is *Waheguru*, the recitation of which expels ego"
(Bhai Gurdas)

There are two methods for reciting and meditating on the Word, "Waheguru". The first is repetition of "Waheguru, Waheguru" and the second is, as taught by the *Panj Piaray* during the Amrit ceremony. This is *simran* of Waheguru with each breath or *swas- swas*. The benefit of *swas-swas simran* is that the rhythmic musical sound of "Waheguru" finds resonance with each breath taken. Breathing goes on for twenty-four hours. As the watch, once wound up, ticks on for twenty-four hours, so if a Gursikh recites *Naam* with every breath i.e. *swas-swas* early in the morning, then *Naam simran* continues automatically all day. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji says in Sukhmani Sahib Ji:-

"Listen to the Teachings of the Perfect Guru; see the Supreme Lord near you. With each and every breath, meditate in remembrance on the Lord of the Universe, and the anxiety within your mind shall depart." (Sukhmani Sahib 24.1; SGGS p. 295)

Waheguru Himself takes those doing *swas-swas simran* into further stages. A day arrives when Satguru Ji reveals the secret of the tenth gate in the mind. Then the devotee's experience is;

"You brawling ignorant person of uncultured intellect, reverse your breath and turn it inward. Let your mind be intoxicated with the stream of Ambrosial Nectar which trickles from the furnace of the Tenth Gate." (SGGS p. 1123)

According to this hymn, when this stage of bliss is reached, then *simran* becomes one (harmonises) with the breathing process. It becomes integrated with each *swas*.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji has disclosed the method by which Gursikhs are to regulate their lives. Rising early in the morning and doing *swas-swas Naam simran* is essential. This is the first principle of *Gursikhi*. All the great holy people have done *simran* in the early morning. It is Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's reign (Kingdom) in the Age of *Kalyug*. Bhai Gurdas has made it clear that "Waheguru" is the *Gurmantar*.

Bhai Gurdas Ji explains in this *Vaar* 1.49 (starting *Satyug, Satgur Vaasdev...at Pauri 49* in *Vaar 1 - 'Vaars* are ballad type of epics written to popular beat and rhythm. *Vaars* used to be very popular in Panjab and some Gurbani is sung to *vaar* measure e.g. *Asa Ji di Vaar* sung in the morning), that in the Age of *Satyug*, Vaasdev was the *avtar* (Divinity) and taught the *simran* of "Vishnu". In the Age of *Duapar*, Hari Krishan was the *avtar* and taught *simran* of "Har Har". In the Age of *Treta*, Ram Ji was the *avtar* and taught the *simran* of "Ram Ram". In this dark Age of *Kalyug*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji taught the *simran* of "Gobind".

And thus taking the first letter from the Divine Name for *simran* in each *Yug*, the *Gurmantar* Word of "Waheguru" or "Vaheguru" was formed (There is no distinction between the "wa" and the "va" sounds in Punjabi. So "VAHEGURU" has V for Vishnu, H for Har, R for Ram, and G for Gobind: the four *Naam* Words for the four Yugs. So Vaheguru (meaning the Wonderful Giver of Light) is the *Naam* Word of *Sikhi* and it includes the *Naam* word used during each of the Yugs. Editing note: Prominent Sikh scholars have expressed doubt about the authenticity of this Pauri being one of

Bhai Gurdas Ji's, although, not about the Word Waheguru being the *Gur Mantar* (Guru's Mystical Word) for *Naam simran*).

The reward of this *Gurmantar* is the highest as it includes the initials of the *Naam simran* words of the four *Yugs*.

In each regime only one currency is used and the old currencies have no value. In the same way the *Mantar* of the old *Yugs* have little value now, for the *Gurmantar* of this *Yug* is "Waheguru". In *Kalyug*, "Waheguru" *simran* is most beneficial.

People Treat Ram like a Toy!

One day I was attending Singh Sabha Gurdwara from 10 to 11 in the morning. I was sitting near the person issuing receipts for donations. It was the day of *Sangrand* (the first day of the lunar month) and there was a large number of *Sangat*. Many Singhs donated money seeking Guru Ji's blessing for whatever prayers they had in mind. The list became very long. Finally, a lady came and donated one pound and twenty-five pence and said, "Last year my husband passed away I would like a prayer said for the peace of his soul. Pray for the health of my younger son and for the well-being of my family." She then continued, "My daughter-in-law is going to India tomorrow, may she return in good health; my son is sitting for exams, pray that he passes; my daughter has a driving test, pray that she passes; my youngest son has no children, please pray that Waheguru grant him the gift of a child." The lady's family was surrounding the treasurer issuing the receipts and noting names for the *Ardaas*. I listened to what was being asked for and was surprised that only worldly gifts were being asked for, no one was asking for the blessing of *Naam*. The lady's name was noted and the family sat in the *Sangat*.

After some time, on completion of the programme of *Naam simran*, the Giani Ji started doing the *Ardaas* (standing prayer). He thought the list of names was very long; that it would take a long time to read all the names and the specific prayers relating to each name. So, he decided to read the names after the *Hukamnama* (reading of a *Shabad* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji at random, for guidance). As the *Hukamnama* started, the lady became upset and went to the treasurer and said, "Giani Ji has not mentioned our name in the *Ardaas*. You sit in the Gurdwara and still do not deal fairly."

The treasurer said, "Your name will be mentioned in the list of donations to be read after the *Hukamnama*." The Giani Ji read the list after the *Hukamnama* and the lady kept sitting near the treasurer until her name came up. Her name was mentioned and she said, "We asked for many things to be mentioned in the *Ardaas*, Giani Ji mentioned my name only." The treasurer said, "Today there are a lot of *Sangat*; you come tomorrow. We shall then do *Ardaas* as you desire." The lady retorted, "I shall then have to come tomorrow again and spend another one pound and twenty-five pence!"

I thought to myself, "People think God is a Toy which can be bought with money. No one is talking about *Naam* and *Bani*. People want to please God with money. But a human being cannot achieve union with God in this way. No one can seek salvation without *Naam*."

"The mortal is entangled in *maya* (see Glossary); he has forgotten the Name of the Lord of the Universe. Says Nanak, without meditating on the Lord, what is the use of this human life? || 30 ||" (SGGS p. 1428)

Love For Animals

(A)

A letter arrived from Bhai Sahib Jagdeesh Singh that in Hollywood (USA), there were a number of individuals ready for *Amrit Sanchaar* (Amrit ceremony); they were keen to be initiated into the Khalsa Panth. I arrived there with the *Jatha* of Bhai Rajinder Singh. Accompanying us was Bhai Hardial Singh and some other Singhs. There was a *Kirtan* programme in the Gurdwara. There we met a wealthy man with his family. They were very pleased to see the *Jatha* and enjoyed the Kirtan programme. He requested that we eat food at his place the following day, but the main *Jatha* was returning to London on that day. The rest of us gave him our time.

He came in good time and took us in his car. As I was about to sit down, the lady drew me aside and said that she wanted to talk to me. I thought, most probably she wants to talk about Gurbani and *Naam simran*; that is, how to meditate on *Naam*. She said, "Today is the anniversary of Chaman Lai. When Chaman Lai came to this house our business prospered. Chaman Lai was so lucky that if we touched dust it became gold! Now we touch gold and it becomes dust." I started wondering, "Who is this Chaman Lai?" This is a Sikh family. The lady said, "He would come and sit next to me; he loved me very much." I would stroke him for a long time. He would fetch the ball back in a second." I was surprised to realise who Chaman Lai was! The lady said, "With Chaman Lai the whole family was happy. The children also enjoyed his company. With him the home atmosphere remained alive. We feel as if we have lost a very precious thing." Saying this, tears filled her eyes. I realised that she was not talking about some person. I asked her who Chaman Lai was. The lady replied that Chaman Lai was their pet dog. While she was shedding tears I could hardly contain my laughter. I kept reciting "Waheguru", thinking what sort of a situation have I got myself into. These people have nothing to say about Waheguru's Name. The lady asked me to say a prayer for the family. During this time we were talking in a room upstairs. I asked her, "Whose room is this? I get the impression that someone has been reciting *Bani* here and doing *Naam simran*." The lady replied, "This is the room of my father-in-law. He brought Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji from India. With great devotion he used to do *Paatth* of Sukhmani Sahib and also continued with *Sehaj Paatth*. He also did much *Naam simran*. Unfortunately, he passed away. We do not take interest in *sewa* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and we have put the Holy Scriptures in a cupboard. Soon after the arrival of my father-in-law, we also brought home a little puppy dog and named it Chaman Lai. It also died soon after father's death."

By that time, their daughter arrived and I was surprised to see her long trailing dress and thought, "Two or three ladies dressed like this would automatically sweep the road as they walk along!" Her mother said, "Say *Sat Sri Akal* to Baba Ji." Instead, she said, "Hello!" and rushed away to change clothes. When she returned, I asked her, "Do you do any *Nit Nem*, *simran* or the *Paatth* of Mool Mantar?" The girl asked her mother in English, "What is Baba Ji saying?" The mother explained. I explained to her, "We have, due to our good fortune received the gift of this human form. We should benefit from *Naam simran*." She again turned to her mother and asked, "What is he saying?" She could not understand a word of Punjabi. Her mother translated whatever I said to her into English. I explained, "By doing *paatth* we prepare the way for a better life hereafter. Those who recite *Naam* are saved from the torments of hellish suffering in the after-life." She said that she did not believe in all that. I told her that Bani says:-

"You have been blessed with this human body. This is your chance to meet the Lord of the Universe. Other efforts are of no use to you. Joining the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy, meditate only on the *Naam*, the Name of the Lord. || 1 ||" (SGGS p. 378)

I told her, "Do *Paatth* of Mool Mantar for five minutes daily." Then I explained to them, "Nothing happened due to Chaman Lai. It was all the blessing of the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Bhai Sahib (the house-lady's father-in-law) enjoyed the bliss of *Naam* and *Bani* and did *Paatth* daily; it was due to the blessing of *Naam* that your business flourished. But you gave up the *sewa* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and started suffering losses in your business." I told them bluntly, "Bhain Ji, I shall take food only if you first do the *Prakaash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji." And that is what they did. Guru Ji's *Prakaash* was done. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was so forgiving and generous that a *Hukamnama* (see Glossary) of blessing was issued. I said, "Do daily *paatth* of the *Hukamnama* you have received today. Guru Ji will shower His Grace on you."

After some time, I received a letter from the family thanking me and that the whole family had started doing *paatth* daily. With Guru Ji's blessing the family business was doing well and their daughter had started doing *paatth* also. I pray to all Gursikhs to teach their children Punjabi (and Gurmukhi script) and to talk to their children in Punjabi.

(B)

When we were staying at the Sydney (Australia) Gurdwara, a lady came to the Gurdwara. She said to the Head Granthi, Bhai Subeg Singh, "Bhai Sahib, I would like to invite the Singhs (our *Jatha*) for a meal (*parshada shakauna*). Bhai Subeg Singh made the programme for the following day. As we were entering the house of this lady, she showed us the grave of Rani, on which was written, when Rani was born and when she died. The lady said, "I loved Rani and today is her death anniversary. Please sing appropriate Shabads." Listening to the *Kirtan*, the lady became emotional. Then she served us food. When we had eaten, she brought out a photo album and said, "Have a look at Rani's photos." We were very much surprised when we saw the photos, that she loved an animal so much. She called her female dog, Rani ("queen"). The lady was alone and she sought the companionship of Rani to deal with her loneliness.

I thought, "O Human being! You have gone astray for you should be seeking the love and companionship of God. Instead you are attached to these worldly things. God will support you here as well as hereafter. The one you love in this life is the one you will remember when your end comes." Bhagat Tarlochan Ji says in his *Shabad*

"At the very last moment, one who thinks of wealth, and dies in such thoughts, shall be born over and over again, in the form of serpents. || 1 || O sister, do not forget the Name of the Lord of the Universe." (SGGS p. 526)

(C)

I was doing *sewa* of washing *thaal* (food serving trays) at Singh Sabha Gurdwara. There was another lady who regularly did *sewa* as well. She had no children; due to the deeds of her previous life she was not blessed with children in this life. However, she had a great desire for children of her own.

After sometime she met me at the Gurdwara once again. We greeted each other with *Waheguru's Fateh* (Sikh greeting) and she said, "Bhai Sahib, we have an additional family member." In my heart, I offered a prayer of thanks to the Lord, that at last her wish was fulfilled. She said,

"Please come to our house." I said that I would drop in over the weekend.

I thought that it was a very happy occasion and I should buy a dress for the child. The shopkeeper asked if it was a boy or a girl. I asked for one which could be worn by either. I reached their house; took off my shoes outside and went to the bathroom to wash my hands. I could not hear any sound of a baby and thought it must be sleeping. I came to the living room and offered my congratulations to the lady's husband. We sat down and after a while he got up, went to the garage and brought in a kitten. It was only then that it dawned upon me that the lady was talking about a kitten! Bhai Sahib (her husband) said, "You will kindly select her name please." I said, "It was born in England, so call it Peter." They were happy with this name and said that no other member of the family had that name. Then they started training him, "Come here; Go there!" and Peter started moving around. The lady's husband said, "Bhai Sahib Ji, it is still young; he will learn as he grows up." By then Peter's mother "Madhu" came in with her dirty feet. The lady said sternly, "I have told you so many times not to walk in with your dirty feet."

Madhu sat down quietly looking upset. The lady said, "You see Bhai Sahib, she gets angry easily." and fed her cat food. The lady was clearly treating the cats like the children she did not have. We started talking. I said to the husband, "Bhai Sahib Ji, I have not seen you at the Gurdwara for many years." He asked me, "What is there at the Gurdwara?" I thought, "If someone's inner wishes are not satisfied, then this is the reaction one would expect." He continued, "Gurdwara is a place for arguments. All are fighting with each other." I was very hurt, that a place where one should be finding peace was being described in this way. Still, I thought he should be helped and said, "From ten to eleven every morning, *Naam simran* is done at the Gurdwara. Do come and make your life successful by doing *sewa*. If nothing else, serve food in the *Langar*." He made some excuse and said he would think about it.

After some months he came to the Gurdwara when "Waheguru" *simran* was going on. I saw him and said a prayer of thanks to Waheguru, "You have inspired him to come to the Gurdwara." As the *Naam simran* was going on his past good deeds bore fruit, his eyes filled up and he went into a state of *bairag* (see Glossary). He met me afterwards and I said, "Have food in the Langar and also take the opportunity to do *sewa*." He said, "Bhai Sahib Ji, I am very grateful to you. I felt such bliss when doing *simran* that I cannot describe it to you. You have shown me the right path." I replied, "Bhai Sahib Ji, there is nothing but bliss and tranquillity here. You will meet many elderly and wise people here. One gets the opportunity to do *sewa* and *simran*. What more does one want? Do *sewa* wholeheartedly." When he met me next time he said that the cat had been handed over to the RSPCA. "We would like to make our lives successful through the Guru's *sewa*;-"

"He places the one who strays back on the path; such a Guru is found by great good fortune. || 1 || Meditate, contemplate the Name of the Lord, O mind. The Beloved Feet of the Guru abide within my heart. || 1 || Pause || The mind is engrossed in sexual desire, anger, greed and emotional attachment. Breaking my bonds, the Guru has liberated me. || 2 || Experiencing pain and pleasure, one is born, only to die again. The Lotus Feet of the Guru bring peace and shelter. || 3 || The world is drowning in the ocean of fire. O Nanak, holding me by the arm, the True Guru has saved me. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 803)

Human life is at the head of other life forms. Yet, human beings love animals more because they deceive each other. That is the reason why they have more affection for pets. O human being! People regard animals as better than you. I read in one newspaper that a driver drove over the pet

dog of a neighbour and broke its leg. The neighbour was so furious that she shot the driver. It gives the impression that human beings have no value today. Animals are better looked after. That was the reason the neighbour was shot. O human being! You still have time. Make your life a success by meditating on God's Name.

In the *Punjab Times* (weekly Punjabi paper), there was a report of a strange marriage. It was written, that a lady arranged a marriage between a bullock and a cow, because she did not have any grown up children of her own. She did this for her own salvation. This marriage took place in a Hindu temple according to Hindu religious rituals. The animal couple wore garlands, the Pundit read the *Mantar* (sacred formula) and the couple were led around the ritual fire. Many Indian dignitaries took part in this ritual. Sweets were distributed and the animal couple, together with the dowry, was seen off to the home for cows. I was amazed to read that this lady arranged this marriage for her own salvation. It is worth pondering, how could this lady achieve salvation by this act?

Until human beings meditate on God's Name (which is the Ultimate Truth), they cannot redeem themselves. Only while reciting God's Name can a human being achieve salvation.

The Cycle of Birth and Death

"The mobile and immobile creatures, insects and moths, in numerous lifetimes, I have passed through those many forms. || 1 || I lived in many such homes, O Lord, before I came into the womb this time. || 1 || Pause || I was a Yogi, a celibate, a penitent, and a Brahmchaaree, with strict self-discipline. Sometimes I was a king, sitting on the throne, and sometimes I was a beggar. || 2 || The faithless cynics shall die, while the Saints shall all survive. They drink in the Lord's Ambrosial Essence with their tongues. || 3 || Says Kabir, O God, have mercy on me. I am so tired; now, please bless me with Your perfection. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 325)

"For so many incarnations, I have been separated from You, Lord; I dedicate this life to You." (SGGS p. 694)

In this Shabad, Bhagat Ravidas Ji says, "O Lord, I have been separated from you for many life cycles, but now this human life goes into your account (i.e. it is devoted to you). He says about his previous life that he was a *Brahmchari* (a holy beggar who controls his senses and who studies Vedas) and was a disciple of Ramanand Ji. He would beg food and prepare food. One day, when he got out of the *Mandar* (temple) to ask for offering, it was raining. Due to the heavy rain, he fell down in front of a shopkeeper's house. The shopkeeper's son was standing there. He helped the Brahmchari Ji (i.e. Ravidas in his previous life) up and, from his house, gave all the food required for the holy people in the Mandar. Brahmchari Ji returned to the Mandar and prepared food. That day Ramanand Ji could not concentrate and meditate on *Naam*. He asked the Brahmchari, "From which house did you beg the food?" The Brahmchari replied, "Due to the rain I brought it only from the house of the shopkeeper." Ramanand Ji was furious and said, "You lowly person, you have a low mentality; you have fed me the food of those who earn their livelihood dishonestly. You have sinned and you will be reborn in a low caste. For this reason the Brahmchari was reborn (as Ravidas Ji) in a low caste family (those who make leather footwear etc. It needs to be remembered that Sikhism, in principle, does not give any credibility to the caste system despite the continued practise of this evil and discriminatory system, much against Guru Ji's injunction. The *Panj Piaray* make this clear during the Amrit Sanchar (Khalsa baptism ceremony). Many such Shabads in Gurbani must be interpreted for their inner meaning. It must be remembered that the idiom and illustrations in Gurbani are those which were readily understood by people. Being born in a low caste was indeed a great punishment those days and Bhagat Ravidas' reference is to this punishment which he received and should not be taken as confirmation on his part of the caste system. When it comes to the statement of the principles of Sikhi, Gurbani is always clear. It is for the Sikh to do research of the Shabad and understand what is true Sikhi; for that very process of researching and finding out is true Sikhi (*Sikhi sikhia Gur vichaar*).

In the same way, Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji, in his letters from the prison (These have been published and are available as "*Jail Chithian*"), writes about his previous life, "I am a prince and I am of young age. It is a beautiful hilly area. In remote caves, at some places, holy people are sitting in meditation. I had an interest in serving them. I would take food of many varieties to them with my servants and soldiers.

"Once, while playing *Holi* (festival when people spray colours on each other), I went to a remote place carrying fruit and milk with me. On the way, in a cave, sat a holy person in deep meditation. He was of very slender build; just bare bones. It seemed as if he was not even breathing.

"I was frightened to see him. I took pity on him and thought that he should be revived. I thought, "No one ever comes this way and this *Sadhu* (ascetic) has not been getting any food to eat. My chance trip this way was meant (by God) to revive him. He is still alive and if he can take a little milk then he would become well again."

"After this thought, I filled the spray pump (used for spraying colours during the *Holi* festivities) with milk and attempted to put the milk in his mouth using the spray. But his teeth were clenched together. His body was stiff like a stone. I sought the help of my guards who used a stone to break his front teeth; and I sprayed some milk into his mouth. With the pain of broken teeth and the sensation of the milk entering his digestive system, his *swas* (life breath) residing in his brain, descended to the normal breathing condition. As he recovered consciousness, he started cursing, "I was meditating to get the kingdom of your father. You have interrupted my meditation. If my wishes are not satisfied, then your heritage of this kingdom will also be destroyed; I shall take revenge in the next life."

"Saying all this and cursing me all the time, he threw a *trishul* (a three pointed spear, symbol of Shiva) at me in great rage. I am not sure from where it came into his hand. I was not hit but it struck and cut off the leg of my guard. Then this scene disappeared from my mind to be replaced by another which appeared to belong to the same life.

"That same *sadhu* who had been meditating, came before me without a leg, but looking very fit and very arrogant. He was leading an army. I said to him, "So this is all you have achieved from your years of meditation, just self-centred arrogance? Who has cut your leg?" He replied, "The same soldier whose leg I cut off with the *trishul*. He shot it and made it useless and I had to get it cut off. That was tit for tat. Now you get ready for I have come to take revenge of my past life." I said, "OK brother. Do as you please." Hearing this he seized me and forced some long instrument into my mouth. It had hardly reached my throat when I woke up. As I came out fully from that meditative state, I felt as if this prediction would take place and it did."

As mentioned before, I (i.e. Bhai Rama Singh Ji) was in the service of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's army. I had also gone through many human life-cycles before that. Meditation during these lives earned me the opportunity to serve with Guru Ji. In turn, as a result of that *sewa*, I have taken birth in Gursikh families but did not achieve salvation. The reason is that while I recited Gurbani I did not do *Naam simran*.

I was a *raagi* (singer of Gurbani *Kirtan*) in my last life. I was with a *raagi* jatha including myself, a blind Gursikh and another who played tabla. Despite being a *raagi*, I had many weaknesses.

Even though I was staying at a Gurdwara, I would not attend the morning or evening prayers in the Sangat. When we would go to some kirtan programme, we would do kirtan only and come away. I was so arrogant that I would not listen to anyone's kirtan. Despite knowing so much about *Gursikhi*, I did not do any *simran* in the morning.

"The Gurmukh getting up in the ambrosial hours of the early morning, takes bath in the sacred tank.

Reciting the holy hymns of the Guru, he then goes to the Gurdwara. There, joining the holy congregation, he lovingly listens to Gurbani, the holy hymns of the Guru.

Effacing all doubt from his mind, he serves the Sikhs of the Guru. Then, by righteous means, he earns his livelihood and he distributes the hard-earned meal.

Offering first, to the Sikhs of Guru, the remainder he himself eats. In this dark age, illumined by such feelings, the disciple becomes Guru and the Guru disciple.

The Gurmukhs tread on such a highway (of religious life)." (Var 40 Pauri 11 Bhai Gurdaas Ji)

As Bhai Gurdas is clarifying in this *Vaar*, what sort of a life a Gursikh should lead, I did not practise that.

I did not preach according to Guru Ji's instructions. I became greedy. I became dishonest in the distribution of money (donated by the *Sangat* listening to Gurbani kirtan). I would give less money to our blind partner. He found out one day and advised me that it was not right to do that but I did not heed his advice because this had become my habit. The blind Singh knew a lot of Bani by heart and he was also one who did *Naam simran*. Once he became upset and said, "Why do you behave like *Pandits* (Hindu priestly class) in your greed? It is the *Pandits* who cheat regarding offerings from devotees. You will be born in a family of *Pandits*." I was frightened.

When they (the Khalsa) follow the ways of the Brahmins, I shall place no trust or faith in them. (Sarab Loh Granth)

I realised that if I am born in a Pandit (Hindu) family, then I will drift away from *Sikhi*.

How will I be blessed with Guru Ji's *darshan*? If I cannot recite Gurbani, how would I achieve the main purpose of life? I was full of remorse and prayed to the blind *raagi* Singh to take back his words. He replied, "What has been said will come to pass."

A hundred years ago the lives of the Gursikhs were of a very high spiritual level. The blind Singh was one such person and he was also a charitable person. Hearing my prayer he said, "Indeed, you will be born in a Pandit family but I shall pray for you that Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself grant you *Sikhi*" For this reason, I was born in a Pandit family. Following that event, I started doing *Naam simran* with great determination. I would do *simran* for hours. My life changed. Today the Singhs do *darshan* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji but they do not put in the effort to do *Naam simran*. Salvation lies only in *Naam simran*.

"Chant the Name of the Lord, O mind, and you shall be emancipated. The Lord shall destroy all the sins of millions upon millions of incarnations, and carry you across the terrifying world- ocean. || 1 || Pause || In the body-village, the Lord Master abides; the Lord is without fear, without vengeance, and without form. The Lord is dwelling near at hand, but He cannot be seen. By the Guru's Teachings, the Lord is obtained. || 1 || The Lord Himself is the banker, the jeweller, the jewel, the gem; the Lord Himself created the entire expanse of the creation. O Nanak, one who is blessed by the Lord's Kind Mercy, trades in the Lord's Name; He alone is the true banker, the true trader. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 720)

The Fruit of Bribery

One day a friend told me that a man has become a high ranking officer. He was thinking of gaining reputation as a good man but at the same time would like to continue receiving bribery. He had an idea. He brought home the holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and did the *Prakash* in a room upstairs. When anyone came for some official favour, the man's wife would say, "Brother, go upstairs and pay your respects to Guru Ji (i.e. do *matha tekan*)." The work of someone who offered a large sum of money before Guru Ji, was done quickly. Slowly, people began to understand the system: that if you donate more money upstairs before Guru Ji, your job was done sooner, while it took longer with less money. If the donation was too small the officer would make some excuse and delay doing anything. The officer's wife was very crafty; she would check the amount of donation made, write it down on a slip of paper and, quietly, hand it over to the husband officer. And so the system continued.

"All the wealth, land and property which you consider your own, when you leave your body, none of it shall go along with you. Why do you cling to them? || 1 ||" (SSGS p. 1231)

Suddenly, the husband and wife were taken ill. It was an illness for which there was no cure. The doctor said that he would have to give them an injection daily for relief. The injection was very expensive. All the wealth that they had accumulated was spent on the illness and then came the realisation: that nothing but unhappiness had resulted from the money they had received by using Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

There are some who never realise, no matter how much they suffer, that they have hurt and put through hardship many people while accumulating their wealth. The official mentioned above told his friend, "I have made a big mistake and realise that to take bribery is evil. We are now suffering as a result."

A Panjabi *bhai* (brother) used to work with me. One day we were talking in the canteen. I asked him, "What is the matter, your face is swollen." He told me, "Bhai Sahib, I have reaped the punishment for my own deeds and cannot blame anyone. My father-in-law had a large business. He had contacts with high officials. He used his influence to employ me as a police officer. I started taking bribery even for petty things. I brought up my family with that money. By chance, an opportunity came up and I migrated with my family to England. Here my son has gone astray. He does not do any work. He takes money from me to buy alcoholic drinks and if I do not give him the money, he beats me; that is the reason my face is swollen. I made people unhappy and took bribery and I am now suffering for that. My own son beats me. What happiness can I expect from such offspring? I carry the burden of people's curses. I now realise what a great sin it is to take bribery."

Guru Ji says, "Earn you livelihood through honest work and share your earnings with those in need. Do not oppress others, and donate one tenth of your income to charity and *sewa*."

The Ignorant Person Accumulates False Wealth

"Like the king, who falls asleep upon his throne, and dreams that he is a beggar. His kingdom is intact, but separated from it, he suffers in sorrow. Such is my own condition. || 2 ||"
(SGGS p. 657)

Every person dreams. In dreams the body sleeps but the mind is active. We dream according to the thoughts we have in our minds when going to sleep.

Once a king dreamt that he had lost his kingdom and that he was a beggar. He was very unhappy. The world we see is like that. The worldly wealth remains in this world. Except for God's Name, nothing else goes with the soul. If a person's mind dwells on bad thoughts, his dreams are like nightmares. However, nice thoughts result in soothing dreams. If one recites *Bani* during the day and sings or listens to *Gurbani Kirtan*, then in the dreams one continues to hear *Gurbani*. There are many who have lots of money but they do not feel like spending it. They are thinking of money all the time.

One rich man came to me and said, "In my dream at night a large snake comes and sits on my chest. Tell me some method by which I can free myself from this apparition." I asked him, "Have you ever donated anything to charity?" He replied, "No, I have acquired the habit of gathering wealth only, not spending it." I recited a few lines from *Gurbani*

"At the very last moment, one who thinks of wealth, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again, in the form of serpents. || 1 || O sister, do not forget the Name of the Lord of the Universe." (SGGS p. 526)

I told him, "Your mind is always on wealth; and, at the end of your life you will still be thinking about wealth. One who remains mentally attached to wealth at the end will get the life of a snake.

You still have time; you can use your wealth to help you to achieve the objective of this life. Donate towards the Langar in the Gurdwara. Help the poor and you will be rewarded. Recite Waheguru's Name." He accepted my advice and said he would try to follow it.

"Nothing shall go with you, except your devotion. Deadly sins are like ashes. Practise the Name of the Lord. O Nanak, this is excellent wealth" (SGGS p. 288)

Wherever one is destined to go one will reach there. Accordingly, a lady living in a village in Punjab managed to get visa to visit England. Her daughter had invited her over to attend a family wedding. The neighbours in the village were very happy thinking that she would return with presents for them. Her relative who had visited her own son in England said that he had shown her many beautiful places. She said, "You should also see these places. I saw the palace of the Queen; it is very big. My son took me to Piccadilly and there are very large shops there. I saw the biggest clock in the world (Big Ben). I saw one place where there are many pigeons (Trafalgar Square) and we threw some food for them. They surrounded us like flies. There was a bridge there which would rise upwards. That bridge is well known all over the world. Trains run underground in London. There are many stairs if you want to get off the train and come to the surface. These stairs go up and down by themselves. If you are standing below you cannot see the top of the stairs. They are that high! I was frightened to see them. I said that I am afraid that I might fall off.

Then I saw a place where there were models of the suit and stars and next door wax statues of famous people. They were worth seeing; they were so life like. There are many other things to see; do go around and see everything. You may not get another chance."

The lady reached England. Another relative who had also come for the wedding said, "Now you are here, why don't you make some money. I work in the fields. I get the equivalent of 1,200 Rupees a day and I make 6,000 Rupees in a week." The lady was much impressed. She could not sleep at night. She had a great urge to make money. She kept waiting for the morning so that she could go to work. She had come with a keen desire to see everything, but forgot it all in her greed for money. She started and kept on working. She became so busy with her work that instead of cooking a proper Punjabi meal of *prauonthas* in the morning, she started eating bread; she would also take bread sandwiches to work and eat them with coke. She changed her dressing style due to her company. She became so greedy that she did not feel like spending any money. She would go to the Gurdwara sometimes on Sundays and would just do *matha tekan* of a penny. Urged on by her greed, she would not get tired either. She regarded it as her good fortune if she got any overtime work. Then she started thinking, "I have so much money, what shall I do with it?" She returned to India after six months. With overtime etc. she made a fairly large sum of money. The family put in a little more money and bought a house in the local city and let it on rent. They were of course staying in the village. The rent started coming in for about six months after which it stopped.

The lady and her son went to collect the rent and the tenant said, "Do not worry; you will get your rent." And so another five or six months passed. They became worried that no rent had been received. The son thought that they should get the rent by making threats. When they made threats, the tenant said, "Are you not aware that I am related to the local police officer? You have bought this house illegally (in order to evade property tax). You can be sent to jail." The tenant told his relative police officer, who said, "Next time they come let me know." When the lady and her son went to ask for rent the next time, the tenant called the police officer. He took the lady's son to the police station and beat him and said, "The next time you ask for rent, I shall shoot you." Worried, the lady became ill. Due to the hard work in the fields in England, she was suffering from back ache as well. She now regretted that she had wasted the money. She had not seen any places in England. If she had given anything for charity, at least that would have given satisfaction to her soul.

If you make a house in India and you do not stay in it, then you have to give it on rent. The tenants often take over and become the owners. There is much bribery and corruption. You can give money and get anything done. Where is the profit in this type of property which cannot be used and which is then taken over by others? A person works day and night to make money but someone else gets the benefit of it. People leave their little children with others and work so hard to make money. If a person reflects a little, and makes his own life successful by remembering God's Name, then that will help here and hereafter. All the material wealth gathered here will remain in this world. Do honest work but also do *Naam simran*. The true wealth (of *Naam*) gives happiness and contentment here and the human soul gets praise and respect beyond this life also. The true wealth is the gift of *Naam* which the *Panj Piaray* confers on an individual when Amrit is taken. By earning this wealth you can achieve salvation.

"Gather such a wealth of the Lord, O brother. It cannot be burned by fire, and water cannot drown it; it does not desert a person." (SGGS P- 375)

"The ignorant fools amass false wealth. The blind, foolish, self-willed *manmukhs* have gone astray. Poisonous wealth brings constant pain. It will not go with you, and it will not yield any profit."
(SGGS p. 665)

One day, a Giani Ji was doing *katha* (see Glossary) in the Gurdwara. He said that about 60 years ago at a village Gurdwara, a Granthi was doing *sewa* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Whoever came to the Gurdwara for *matha tekan*, would donate something i.e. money or things. He should have used the offerings for the Gurdwara but he was more interested in saving the money for himself.

A big *mela* (fair) is held at Hardwar (Hindu holy place) every twelve years. It is called *Kumbh da Mela*. It was the year of this *mela* at Hardwar and he thought of going there. He took the money he needed and locked the rest in a trunk. There was a great crowd at the *mela* at Hardwar and in the rush he died. When he died, his mind was on money, so he was reborn in the life form of a snake. When the Granthi did not return for some time, the people wanted to see what was in his room. The room was locked. They broke the lock and entered the room and saw a snake sitting on the trunk. That is because at the end of his life, the Granthi's mind was fixed on money. A person who has not been charitable and keeps his mind to the end of his life on wealth he will be reborn a snake.

"One who thinks of wealth at the end (of his life), and dies in such thoughts, shall be born again and again in the serpent species. (SGGS p. 526)

The Cycle of Maaya

(*Maaya* is attachment to this material world and wealth, personified. Equates to Mammon in the New Testament- see Glossary.)

"*Maaya* is a serpent, clinging to the world. Whoever serves her, she ultimately devours."
(SGGS p. 510)

When a human being is hanging upside down in the womb, then he prays to Waheguru to free him from that predicament. "From birth I shall remember You," says the human soul. On taking birth, the baby cries due to the break of the meditative link with Waheguru. Exceptionally, there is one who does not cry, and that great soul has been sent with a special mission: to teach humanity to serve God's creation i.e. to do *sewa* and to teach *Naam simran*.

After taking birth, the child gets caught in the net of *maaya*: attachment, desire for material things and comforts grows. Greed takes over. That is the luring cycle of *maaya* at work.

"Childhood, youth and old age, know these as the three stages of life. Says Nanak, without meditating on the Lord, everything is useless; you must appreciate this." (SGGS p. 1428)

To attain *jiwan mukti* (salvation), a soul has to migrate through many life forms (The end purpose of all life represented in *Sikhi* by the achievement of complete harmony of the soul with the Ultimate Reality, the Waheguru Ji). A man makes many an effort to earn a living. He travels from one country to another looking for work. For example, many people left their country (*Des*) Punjab to migrate to Canada, America and England etc. In the same way, Bhai Harbans Singh, Bhai Gursharan Singh and I came to England.

The early Punjabi settlers in England first worked very hard in factories, saved money and bought their own houses. As people made more money, their ambition and greed also increased. First they bought houses to live in then they started buying businesses. With increasing material ambition they started forgetting Waheguru's Name. My fellow Gursikhs also followed the trend.

Bhai Harbans Singh Ji of Walsall first started work in a factory and educated his children. The children qualified as pharmacists and opened up their own businesses as chemists. First they opened one shop and it was very profitable. And so they opened a second, a third and later a fourth shop. They had four shops. The two sons took over two and the others were let to non-Sikh managers. As these employee managers took over, the profits began to drop.

One day Sant Shisha Singh Ji, who was making a collection for a charity, dropped in at their house; only then they realised that they should use their wealth for a good cause. Baba Ji said, "We would like you to do *sewa* of a truck." Bhai Harbans Singh Ji donated money for a truck and also made a further contribution. From that day Bhai Harbans Singh Ji started donating *daswandh* (one tenth of net income) and the business started picking up. Bhai Sahib got his family around him and said, "We were born to do *Naam simran* but we have got caught in the cycle of *maaya* and forgotten *Satguru*. They all realised this. Today they do *Naam simran* and do *sewa* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

When we initiated Bhai Harbans Singh of Walsall with *Amrit*, he experienced scenes from the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. After the *Amrit Sanchar*, he came to me and said, "Bhai Sahib Ji it seems that in some past life we were together."

I went to see Bhai Harbans Singh. There was a *Prakaash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in their second house. After doing the *Sukhaasan* of Guru Ji, we started talking. As we talked, we went into a meditative state. The scene of a war came in front of us. We had accompanied Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji in the battlefield.

When talking again, Bhai Harbans Singh said, "I have great regard for you but you do not remember me, you do not telephone, are you upset with me?" I told him, "Bhai Sahib Ji, we were together in the last life cycle. If we meet too often then I begin to remember the happenings of the previous life, just as we saw the battlefield scene. Talking about the past life can rouse attachment. We are close to Waheguru and if we talk about the past life then we could drift away from Waheguru due to our previous attachment. We could get caught in further life cycles. So I do not trouble you too much. I know the whole family respects me."

In this way, sometimes, separated friends meet again. Sant Baba Sewa Singh Ji too was with me during the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. In affection he would bless me and, when very much pleased with me, he would say, "Hail Rama Singh; in him there is something."

In the same way Bhai Gursharan Singh Southall, Bhai Jagtar Singh and Bhai Avtar Singh also worked very hard to become well to do. They joined together and bought a shop. The business flourished and they bought another shop. They became more ambitious as is the nature of *maaya*, and bought as yet another shop. At this point they started going through business difficulties. However, Guru Ji defended their honour, because they had faith in the Guru. Guru Ji always protects anyone who becomes attached to Him. Through Guru Ji's grace everything was sorted out. Even during the hard times they would donate *daswandh* for Anandpur Sahib.

One day I was talking to Bhai Gursharan Singh and he said, "I was nine years old when I saw the scene of a battlefield in my dream, that I was lying wounded in the field. At that time, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was passing that way with *Panj Piaray* and he asked them to pause and said, "Our Singh is lying wounded here." Guru Ji, gave me water and also spoke to me, but I do not now remember the words."

At that time Bhai Sahib did not have much knowledge of Gurbani. He would always pray for the gift of Bani. Now he is enjoying Waheguru's grace. Bhai Sahib has memorised the *Five Banis* (see *Panj Banis* in the Glossary) and *Asa di Vaar*, *Sukhmani Sahib* and other Banis. He also does sweet *Gurbani Kirtan* and is very much attached to Anandpur Sahib because in an earlier life he was there in the battles of Anandpur. He does most of his *sewa* at Anandpur.

O human being! You have come for reciting WaheGuru's Name. Do *Naam simran* and make your life a success. Only that is true wealth. Only this wealth will accompany you after death. Sikhs should make material progress but they should remain aloof from the greed of wealth.

"No one is more powerful than the she-serpent *maya*, who deceived even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. (SGGS p. 480)

All these people became entangled in the net of *maaya*, but Guru Ji saved them with His own helping hand. I too became engrossed in the cycle of *maaya*. This *maaya* which tempted even Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeo, the three Hindu deities (trinity) representing creation, life sustenance and the power of destruction (It needs to be remembered that whilst these names appear in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the popular idiomatic expressions for God or God's power, *Sikhi* belief is in One God only as described in the *Mool Mantar* (the Basic Precept) given at the beginning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji).

"Such is *maaya*, the *woman*, which the One Lord has created. She is devouring the whole world, but the Guru has saved me, O brother. || Pause || Administering her poisons, she has overcome the whole world. She has bewitched Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva." (SGGS p. 394)

(*Woman* denotes the attractive quality of *maaya* in this context and no more. In interpreting Gurbani, the gender equality of *Sikhi* must always be kept in mind. Some Sikh preachers tend to forget this important point.)

I too did not remain untouched by this *maaya*. However, as Guru Ji helped these people, so I was saved also.

"Taking by the arm, You lifted your own, out of the deep dark pit of attachment and *maaya*. Says Nanak, the Guru has broken my bonds, and ended my separation; He has united me with God." (SGGS p. 1218)

All these people, even after suffering such losses did not leave the door of the Guru; instead they started reciting more Bani. Otherwise, even with a little suffering, people start accusing the Guru, "What has the Guru done for us? We go to the Gurdwara; we do *paatth*, but even then Guru Ji has not helped us."

I pray in earnest that no person should move away from the door of the Guru. We must have full confidence in the Guru. Guru Ji helped me. Due to the recitation of Sukhmani Sahib, my sins were destroyed in a dream. Guru Ji has stood by anyone who has kept away from the cycle of *maaya*.

The Life Of Gursikhs - (The desire to do sewa)

(Humility of Bhai Gurdas Ji)

"(May) the Gursikhs wear out shoes made from my skin.

The dust of the (feet of) saints touch the foreheads of only those who are most fortunate."

(A)

Every person in the world spends time with one's own family after the day's work. There are only a few who take time off to do *sewa* at the Gurdwara with *Satguru's* Blessing. Some in my acquaintance (at Southall in England), whose names are worth mentioning are: Chacha Darshan Singh, Bhai Kesar Singh Mand, Late Bibi Gurdial Kaur, Bhai Gurdial Singh Gill, Bhai Jagir Singh, Late Bhai Kartar Singh and Bhai Surjeet Singh Bilga. They consulted with each other and made the effort to build a Gurdwara in Southall. There were only about 50-60 Singhs in Southall at the time.

They joined together and started Gurdwara programmes at Beaconsfield Road, Southall. There was no one in Southall at the time who could do *Gurbani Kirtan*. There were a few who could do *Paatth* at Gurdwaras. In the Langar, Bhai Shankar Singh would make *pakaudas*, put them in small bags and would distribute them with tea. At that time no ladies had arrived in England. All were thinking of returning to India, but no one could get out of the *sweet prison* of this country. Slowly families started arriving and people started buying their own houses here. There was one Punjabi food ration shop owned by a Bhai.

The Punjabi inhabitants with families started increasing and their colourful style made the town livelier. There was a Bingo hall at the corner of Beaconsfield Road. They would rent it over the weekends for *Diwan* (holding religious programmes in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). They would clean and mop the hall floor on Saturday night and would spread white sheets for the *Sangat*. On Sunday, the *Sawari* (Carriage) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji would be brought from the house of Bhai Pritam Singh Ji Baura and Asa Ji di Vaar would begin at 7.30 in the morning. Bhai Ranjodh Singh Ji Diwana accompanied by Bhai Kesar Singh Mand did the Kirtan. Bhai Gurbachan Singh did the *sewa* of the tabla. Bhai Dharam Singh used to do Kirtan with the small drum, the *dhholki*, and Bhai Mihan Singh would do some *katha*. Bhai Kesar Singh, with the support of his colleagues would distribute *atta* (flour) and *daal* to a number of families for cooking *langar* and would collect the cooked *langar* (*rotis* and *daal*) on Sunday morning and take it to the hall where the *Diwan* (see Glossary) was being held.

When the *Sangat* increased then, with the initiative of Bhai Kesar Singh Mand, the *Sangat* collected 6,000 pounds for buying a building at The Green (Southall) for the Gurdwara. By this time many ladies were there to do *sewa* of the *langar* which began to be prepared at the new Gurdwara.

At the building bought on The Green much cleaning needed to be done. Chacha Darshan Singh, Kesar Singh Mand, Surain Singh and Pritam Singh Baura did this. The Gurdwara Sahib was formally inaugurated on the Gurdwarab of Guru Arjan Dev Ji's martyrdom. The *Sangat* kept increasing and this place seemed too small for holding *Diwans*.

One day, Kesar Singh and Hardial Singh saw a milk dairy house for sale on Havelock Road. The price was £26,000 (UK currency). They spoke to Bhai Gurcharan Singh Gill. He took out a loan on his own assurance for this building. On this place was then established the world famous

Gurdwara, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall. The Sangat selected Bhai Gurcharan Singh Gill as the first President.

The keys for this Gurdwara were obtained on 1 January 1967. The 300th anniversary of the *Prakash Utsav Gurburab* of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was in that same year on 22 January 1967. The inauguration of the Gurdwara was also arranged for the same date. Much needed to be done. The partitioning walls between 9 rooms had to be knocked down to make the *Sangat* hall. Bhai Kesar Singh Ji started the work, and with the support of the Sangat this work went on day and night. Chacha Darshan Singh would do *sewa* after work also.

The family of Bhai Kesar Singh Mand is in full *Gursikhi*. He has done much work in education and other fields. When in 1977, the Shromani Committee celebrated the 400th anniversary of the establishment of the city of Sri Amritsar as the "*Amritsar Sthapna Divas*", then Bhai Kesar Singh Mand, Bhai Ranjit Singh Bhail and Giani Amolak Singh jointly organised the celebrations at the Royal Albert Hall, London. This programme was attended by eleven senior members of the Punjab Government, Shromani Akali Dal and the Shromani Committee. At that time, Kesar Singh Mand, with his colleagues set up an organisation called the "International Golden Temple Radio Corporation" and submitted a request to the Government of India that they would like to install an international range transmitter in Sri Harmandar Sahib. This would enable the international Sikh community to listen to the morning Hukamnama and the Gurbani Kirtan from Sri Harmandar Sahib. All the expenditure would be incurred by the emigrant Sikh community but the Indian Government refused to accept this demand. At that time Kesar Singh Mand had given this matter high profile through the media. It was due to the initiatives of Bhai Kesar Singh Mand that the 500th birthday anniversary (*Prakash Utsav Gurburab*) of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and the 300th *Prakash Utsav* of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, were celebrated in the Royal Albert Hall. Then the 300th anniversary of the martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur (*Shahidi Gurburab*) was also celebrated in the Albert Hall in 1975. These programmes were managed from the stage by Bhai Kesar Singh Ji in a most efficient manner. He is serving the Sikh Panth through his enlightened articles. All the children of the Mand family do very melodious Gurbani Kirtan in classical *raags*.

(B)

The late Chacha Darshan Singh was also very keen on doing *sewa*. Chacha Ji would take any saintly person or scholar arriving from India to his house. He would do *sewa* with all his heart. He would persuade the others too to do *sewa*. He did much *sewa* of washing utensils in the *Langar* at the Gurdwara and he did that continuously for 32 years. He had acquired such spiritual harmony through *sewa* that whatever he said in his sincere and simple manner came to pass. He knew Nit Nem, Sukhmani Sahib and the *Bani* of Guru Tegh Bahadur by heart. He would continue reciting *Bani* while doing *sewa*.

One day a lady came to the Gurdwara to do *sewa* of washing utensils and trays. She did this for about five minutes and then started to leave; Chacha Ji said, "Bibi where are you going? If you would like your *sewa* to be successful then you should do it for at least half an hour." The lady started doing *sewa* whole-heartedly. One day while she was doing *sewa*, Chacha Ji asked her, "How many children do you have?" The lady replied. "I have two daughters." Chacha Ji said, "Continue doing *sewa*, there is no shortage in the Guru's House." She kept on doing *sewa* and was blessed with a baby son.

One other lady used to do *sewa* at the Gurdwara. She spoke to Chacha Darshan Singh that her daughter-in-law had come from India and suffered from severe headache on one side of her head.

She had received treatment in India and in England but no cure had been found. Chacha Ji said, "The biggest Doctor is Sri Guru Granth sahib Ji sitting in the Gurdwara. Do *matha tekan* daily, wipe the Sangat's shoes with a handkerchief and wipe it over the part of the head where it pains. The Guru will help." The lady's daughter-in-law started doing the *sewa* of cleaning Sangat's shoes and her head ache stopped.

(C)

Everyone reads or hears Gurbani, but few research and understand its deeper meaning. Bhai Sohan Singh of Slough is one Gursikh who has great affection for *Sikhi*. He attends the Gurdwara daily. The Gurdwara Sahib is near his house. He is totally dedicated to reciting and listening to Gurbani.

Bhai Sahib Ji told me that one day he went for *darshan* at the Gurdwara and an *Akhand Paatth* (continuous reading of Sri Guru Granth sahib Ji) was in progress. He was very much touched by the following Shabad: -

"One or two are in the house, and one or two more are on the way. We sleep on the floor, while they sleep in the beds. They rub their bare heads, and carry prayer books in their waistbands. We get dry grains, while they get loaves of bread." (SGGS p. 871)

He said, "I was in deep *bairag* (see Glossary) when I heard this Shabad and felt great sorrow. I went home and the wife, Surinder Kaur, asked why I looked so sad. I said to her, "The Bani of Bhagat Kabir is ringing in my ears. Despite his poverty, Kabir Ji served all those who visited him. The Lord has given us everything but still we have no keen desire to do *sewa*."

Hearing this, their wife was also very much touched. She said, "If any Gursikh comes to our house, I shall serve food. If we do *sewa* then our life will be successful. My soul will be helped also. Many Gursikhs know you, why don't we organise a *Kirtan* programme at home?" And so they invited many Singhs on a *Kirtan* programme and almost all came.

I have noticed that whenever some Singh comes from outside, they ask him to stay at their place. For example, Bhai Jiwan Singh, Dr. Tejinderpal Singh Doola, Bhai Puran Singh Ji, Bhai Sahib Chani Ji, Bibi Harjit Kaur and Bibi Bhupinder Kaur etc., they all stayed at Bhai Sohan Singh Ji's place. They do dedicated *sewa*.

(D)

One day, Bhai Jarnail Singh Ji met me at *Raaen Subaaee* (see Glossary) *Kirtan*. He said, "I keep saying to my parents to take Amrit, but they would not listen. Both go to the Gurdwara daily and do *sewa* with great dedication. They are content with just doing *sewa* and do not think that there is any need to take Amrit. They have been prepared to take *Amrit* at times but then they go and tell their friends that they are going to take Amrit. Their friends tell them, "Forget it, what is there in *Amrit*. We do *sewa* at the Gurdwara and that is enough for salvation." Hearing this, father changes his mind again. When I ask again, "Father, are you ready to take Amrit?" Father would say, "I am ready but your Mum is not ready to wear a *keski* (small turban beneath the head cloth or *dupatta*). When she is ready we will take *Amrit*. And so he makes excuses. When I go home then mother asks me to take food. I say, "When you take *Amrit* only then will I eat food cooked by you." Mother says, "We looked after you and brought you up, now you don't eat food made by us."

After some time I went to my parents house. Mother asked me to eat food. I explained to my mother, "I have now *adopted sarabloh*" (*sarabloh* means "iron" and the reference here is to Amrit which is prepared in an iron bowl with a double edged sword called Khanda); "I eat food prepared by *Amritdharis* (those who have taken Amrit) and served in iron utensils only." I did not eat food that day. Mother was much pained by this.

When father came home, mother was very sad and told him that "today my *Gursikh* son did not eat food." Father said if you want to serve food, I shall bring five Singhs tomorrow and you can prepare food for them.

The following day, father went and told five Singhs to come and eat at home. Mother was very happy that five Singhs were coming to eat. She prepared *langar* with devotion. When she saw the Singhs, she was surprised because none of them seemed to be keeping full *rehat* of Gursikhs. All had cut their beards. Mother asked them to say the prayer (*Ardaas*) and they looked at each other. Father said the *Ardaas* and food was served. However, mother was not happy. I too made fewer visits to my parent's house.

One day, *Katha* (sermon) was in progress at the Coventry Gurdwara Sahib that Baba Atar Singh Ji Masthuana said to his mother to take *Amrit* because there was no certainty of this life. However, Baba Ji's mother did not show much interest. Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji had given Baba Ji the duty of *Amrit Sanchar* and Baba Ji had persuaded many hundreds of thousands to be initiated into full *Sikhi rehat*.

Time passed and quite suddenly, Baba Ji's mother passed away. Her soul appeared before Dharam Raj (the divine judge at the door of the spiritual world, who assesses good and bad deeds of individuals). He thought, "This is the mother of a great saint; I cannot send her to hell, nor can I send her to the heavenly *Sach-khand* for she has not taken *Amrit*" He said to the mother, "I can give you three more days of life. Go and take *Amrit* and you will be given a place in *Sach-khand*." Mother took *Amrit* and then passed on to *Sach-khand*.

When father heard this *katha*, he was frightened. He kept telephoning me but I was not at home. When he was able to talk to me he said, "Where were you, I have been telephoning you. When will the next *Amrit Sanchar* take place?" I told him that it was to take place the following month. He said, "Next month? That is too long. Can't it be arranged sooner? I would like to take *Amrit* as soon as possible." He was now very impatient to take *Amrit*. I told him that *Amrit Sanchar* was taking place the following month at Leamington Spa on the *Shaheedi* day (day in remembrance of martyrs) and *Amrit Sanchar* did take place that day."

I was standing next to Bhai Jarnail Singh near the shoes. His father, Bhai Pritam Singh also came there. There was a lot of rush. Every one who came would greet Bhai Jarnail Singh and ask about his welfare. Bhai Pritam Singh standing there was surprised that everyone was greeting Bhai Jarnail Singh but not him. He thought that if he had taken *Amrit* earlier, he too would be popular and people would greet him with the same warmth. When he took *Amrit* his whole life changed. Bhai Jarnail Singh was very happy. After taking *Amrit* both (Bhai Pritam Singh and his wife) would do *Naam simran*. They would get up early at one o'clock in the morning and start *Naam simran* and more than caught up with others in this respect. Bhai Pritam Singh would sometimes do *sewa* as one of the *Panj Piaray*.

This is the Age of *Kalyug* (see Glossary). Parents should be teaching children, but these days the children teach parents. One day Kuldeep Singh, son of Chacha Darshan Singh said to me, "Come let me take you to see the Singhs of Leicester." I went with him. Bhai Kuldeep Singh was totally dedicated to *Naam simran*. Bhai Kuldeep Singh, Bhai Joginder Singh, Bhai Inderjit Singh and Bhai Onkar Singh would sit together and do *simran* early in the morning. Bhai Kuldeep Singh took me with him and I met all these Gursikhs there (at Leicester). Bhai Joginder Singh said, "Bhai Sahib Ji, all our family members have taken *Amrit* but our parents are not prepared to do so. Look at the cycle (reverse trend) of *Kalyug* that it should be the parents advising their children to take *Amrit*. Now I am telling them but they would not listen. You try, see if they listen to you." I spoke to Bhai Joginder Singh's parents, "Do become *Amritdhari*, for then you will be saved from the burden of accounting (for your deed as you enter the next world); you will be saved from the beating by the *yams* (those who carry out the punishment) of hell." They said they would think about it. They took *Amrit* after some time. Bhai Joginder Singh was so keen that he learned to do beautiful Gurbani Kirtan. Seeing his humility he was elected *Jathedar* (leader) many times by the Sangat. His main aim while he was the *Jathedar* was to bring unity in the Panth and that all Gursikhs should show brotherly affection.

"The person, who is not affected by pleasure, affection or fear, and who looks alike upon gold and dust." (SGGS p. 633)

The Lord resides in the heart of one who gives up others' wealth and follows a strict moral code regarding sexual relations. In this *Kalyug* (see Glossary), it is very difficult to shun these. Even holy people of the highest order (the *rishis* and *munis*) get entangled in this web of *maaya* (see Glossary). If a person is blessed by Guru Nanak, then that person regards earth and gold alike i.e. becomes immune to temptation of any sort. That person attains salvation from this world. There are many Gursikhs who regard the Gurdwara's money as the Guru's money and spend it only on the Gurdwara related causes. One such Gursikh is Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji Sagoo. He has taken a very full part in the *sewa* of the Gurdwara and continues to do so.

While earning his livelihood, he contributed towards the construction of Bebe Nanaki Gurdwara. Pleased with his *sewa*, Bibi Balwant Kaur made him the *head sewadar* (one who leads *with humility* in the management of a Sikh organisation). He kept very detailed accounts of all income and expenditure. He carries out his *sewa* duties in a most proficient manner. Due to his efforts and the generosity of the Sangat, Bibi Balwant Kaur constructed a Bebe Nanaki Gurdwara and hospital in India. He has such a pleasant personality that everyone is attracted to him.

Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji met me once and I asked him, "How did you develop such a close interest in *Gursikhi*?" he said, "My Baba Ji (grandfather) used to recite a lot of Gurbani and would take me to the Gurdwara. My parents too were devoted to the *Guru Ghar* (Guru's House). When I was still young, a holy person (*saadhu*) came to the Gurdwara. He was very pleased to see me doing *sewa* and said, "I shall give you *gur mantar* (see Glossary) whereby your attachment to Waheguru will increase." He said, "Be fresh and alert and sitting cross legged (as in the Gurdwara), do the *simran* of *Ohang Sohang*. Accordingly, I kept on doing the *simran* of *Ohang Sohang* but without much result.

On one occasion the Gurdwara librarian went on leave and made me responsible for the library. I had the opportunity to read religious books there. After reading the books, I came to understand that the *Gur Mantar* is "Waheguru". I was very sad that having taken birth in a Gursikh family why did I allow myself to be led astray. Then I started "Waheguru" *simran* and I started enjoying

spiritual peace. Having read many books my knowledge increased and I took *Amrit*. My past good deeds bore fruit. I met Bibi Balwant Kaur in East Africa and in her company I became dedicated to '*Kirtan* and *simran*.

I noticed that when the members of this family sit to do *simran* they all become immersed in *simran* and they continue doing it for hours. They do not allow a break in *simran*. If one person gets up another sits in that person's place. Even little children use *khadtaals* (hand-held small rounded metal discs for producing metallic musical sound) for keeping rhythm of *simran*. There are only a few families who join in *simran* in this way. All do *sewa* on tabla (i.e. play tabla drums) and harmonium. Others gain spiritually from the *simran* of this family. They do *simran* in the *Sangat* every morning at Bebe Nanki Gurdwara.

Every Gursikh should make such an effort. Children should be guided towards the path of *Gursikhi*. Generally, people do not have faith in the Guru. Mostly, they advise their children to study well and gain qualifications, so that they can get good jobs. They do not teach them anything about *Gursikhi* - the Sikh culture, language and the Sikh way of life in accordance with the Guru's teachings. There are other *Gursikhs* who have total faith in the Guru. They teach Nit Nem to their children with their other studies and encourage them to do *Nit Nem* (see Glossary). The Guru helps a child who follows this advice. The child is granted the gift of tabla and harmonium. The Guru helps in studies as well. Such children gain qualification, do good jobs and sing the praises of the Guru.

The motivated young Sikhs are keen to learn *Kirtan* with their studies and arrange weekly programmes. There are many doctors in America who do melodious *Kirtan*. Bhai Tejinder Pal Singh is a doctor and does melodious *Kirtan*. Bhai Manjit Singh of Glasgow has M.Sc. degree. His past good deeds awakened his spirit. He became interested in *Kirtan* at the age of eight. He said, "Seeing my interest my father bought me a harmonium and tabla. They did not restrict me. However, my parents did say that if I started learning *Kirtan* how would I study? But due to the blessing of Guru Ji I did well in studies also." Dr Dupinder Singh plays harmonium and tabla well. Bhai Prabhjot Singh is a doctor and does melodious *Kirtan*.

Everyone knows Giani Amolak Singh Ji. He is educated and is accomplished in *Gurbani Kirtan*. He specialises in both harmonium and tabla. He accompanied Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji for many years.

(G)

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji was a most saintly person. One day he met Bibi Gulab Kaur Ji. Bibi Gulab Kaur symbolised positive spirit of a Gursikh soul. She blessed Bhai Sahib saying, "O Sikh of the Guru you have achieved the state of bliss. In you, Satguru Ji has lighted a lamp." Bhai Sahib requested humbly, "Be charitable, so that this lamp should continue radiating light." She blessed him with these words, "This bright lamp shedding the light of Waheguru's Name in devotees' hearts, will burn ever more brightly." She instructed, "Start holding continual *Gurbani Kirtans* and *Akhand Paatths*." Bhai Sahib started organising *Akhand Paatths* and all night (*Raaen Subaaee*) *Kirtan* programmes. Now, the Gursikhs living in India and abroad enjoy the bliss of *Raaen Subaaee* *Kirtan*.

Bhai Sahib Ji would always pray for the rising spirit of the Khalsa Panth. He did not start his own *dera* i.e. establishment or school, because, then the Singhs would think of the progress of that particular establishment and not about the progress of the whole Panth.

Series of Kirtan programmes continued during Bhai Sahib's time. For this reason the name of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh's Gurbani Kirtani *jatha* (group) came to be known as the Akhand Kirtani Jatha. *Akhand* means continuous i.e. to sing the Guru's praises continuously. *Kirtan* is done continuously in the same way as *Akhand Paatth*. After Bhai Sahib, Bhai Mai Singh did *sewa* in the Jatha.

The Jatha is doing selfless *sewa* of the Panth. All donate *daswandh* (one tenth of earnings) for *Amrit Parchaar* (preaching and holding *Amrit Sanchar*) tours in many countries. They pay all expenses themselves. If Bhai Sahib had established own school (*dera*) then this *sewa* would not have been done in this way. To label gold as "gold" is not a bad thing; not so if you present bronze as "gold".

(H)

"(Waheguru Himself) looks after his *sewak* (servant)) and inspires him to do Naam simran."
(SGGS p.403)

One day Bhai Prem Singh decided to invite five Singhs for food. I was one of those invited. The whole family did *sewa* with great devotion. There was a photo of an elderly Gursikh on the wall. I asked, whose photo it was. Bhai Sahib said, "It is my father, Sardar Gurdial Singh's photo. He would recite Sukhmani Sahib daily and also did *Naam simran*. My mother Amar Kaur Ji also had great faith in Gurbani. My father was in the Navy (Police) at Singapore."

"One day father's duty was on a watch tower on a hill. To reach it one had to walk through the graveyard. For that reason no one was prepared to do duty there. Everyone was frightened. The duty was at night and father said that he would do the duty. Father would do *Paatth* of Sukhmani Sahib all night. One day as he was doing *paatth* he dozed off. At once a *Shaheed Singh* (spirit of a martyr Singh) said, "Singh of the Guru, it is morning time; get up and do *Naam simran*. Father got up and started reciting Naam simran. After some time his officer came and said, "I am very satisfied with your performance. You are doing a good job. You should get a promotion."

"One night when doing night duty father saw a large snake with a spread hood heading towards him. Suddenly there was lightening and it struck the snake. Father was grateful to Waheguru Ji." A person, who recites Sukhmani Sahib and *Naam simran*, becomes fearless. Waheguru is close to that person and protects him as in the case of Bhai Gurdial Singh Ji. This is all due to the strong beneficial influence of *Naam* and *Bani*.

(I)

I accompanied Baba Sewa Singh to Vancouver and we stayed at the Tatt Khalsa Gurdwara. The Giani Ji of the Gurdwara knew Baba Ji well. He helped to make a collection for Baba Ji from many places. After this we went to Roses Street Gurdwara. The evening *Diwaan* (Gurbani Kirtan and prayers) was being held. There we met Bhai Ripdaman Singh Malak. I told him that Baba Ji had come from Anandpur Sahib to make a collection. He requested that we ate food at his place the following day. He had a large house. He gave the equivalent of 20,000 Rupees and showed great respect to Baba Ji. He said, "Baba Ji you are doing much good work, When you come again please do meet me." When I went to Vancouver again, I saw the charity he had given brought him more wealth. He had opened his own bank.

"One who is a Singh himself is duty bound to help poor Singhs." (Rehatnama)

Bhai Sahib Singh enjoys Guru Ji's grace and runs four banks now. He has been very helpful to others and employs many in his banks. With the help of the *Sangat*, he has built a Gurdwara and a college. Here, the children first go to the Gurdwara in the morning, they do *Kirtan* and *Ardaas* and then attend their classes. With their other studies they also learn about the Sikh religion.

Wealthy Gursikhs in other countries like England and America should follow the good example of the *Sangat* of Vancouver to ensure that our children should not move away from *Sikhi*. They should think about the next generation. If similar initiatives are taken, and Khalsa colleges opened for our children then they will not give up Sikh identity and *rehat*. Such initiatives are today's need. If anyone makes this effort then it would be a great *sewa* of the Sikh nation. As Bhai Ripdaman Singh and the *Sangat* of Vancouver have built a Gurdwara and a college, this is an outstanding example for the Sikhs; anyone who takes such an initiative will always be remembered. With such an effort, many get jobs. All those who work in these institutions (Gurdwaras and colleges) are Sikhs. If one has wealth then one should also have the generosity of heart. Charity never results in a loss but always in gain; it is also like sowing the seeds of good deeds for hereafter.

After the visit to Vancouver, we went to a small island to Bhai Joginder Singh. He runs milk diaries. He knew Baba Ji well. He donated money and also made a collection from his relatives and friends and supported Baba Ji's cause. Good people always have good ideas. They always look ahead and think of improving the life of others. He felt that there should be a Gurdwara near the motorway there. It is a beautiful site. Accommodation could be provided for tourists. We returned to England after making a collection from America and Canada. Baba Ji stayed in England for a week and then went back to India.

(J)

A human being remembers everything else but forgets Waheguru's Name and keeps thinking about personal enjoyment and comfort. An individual remains attached to own family. Sometimes one thinks about expansion of business, sometimes about buying a car of the latest make and a large house for living; immersed in these thoughts he forgets God's Name. Many families do not even recite Gurbani. Wherever I go, I remind families, "You are not lax about *Nit Nem* (see Glossary), are you? Are you living according to *Gurmatt* (Guru's teachings)? How much do you respect Bani?" In *Gurmatt*, to remind someone that it is important to do *Nit Nem* and *sewa* is an act of community service.

One day Bhai Sucha Singh arranged an *Akhand Paatth*; when he was eating Langar, he came and sat near me. I asked him, "How is your Nit Nem going." Bhai Sahib told me, "With Guru Ji's grace, I get up at 1 o'clock in the morning. First I go for a walk for half an hour. Then I take a bath and do the *Prakaash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Then I do the *Paatth* of Sukhmani and then from 4.00 to 5.00 attend the morning Naam simran." I asked him, "Are you an *Akhand paatthi*? Do you have more satisfaction doing *paatth* at speed or more slowly?" (Note: An *Akhand paatthi* is able to do fluent *paatth* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.) He said, "I have much satisfaction and enjoyment in doing *paatth* slowly. Sometimes, I am required to do *paatth* a bit fast but I do not enjoy that. Of course, those who listen would not enjoy *paatth* at speed either."

He asked me, "Bhai Sahib, is it essential that an *Akhand Paatth* must be completed in 48 hours?" I said, "There is no time limit for completing *Akhand Paatth*. The meaning of *Akhand Paatth* is that *Gurbani* should be read continuously without a break. However, the *Bani* should be read correctly so that those listening are also understanding and enjoying it"

(K)

Bhai Raghbir Singh said that their *jatha* (group) of twelve Singhs led by Bhai Malkit Singh, was returning from Calgary to Vancouver (Canada) after doing Kirtan. It was a journey of 12 or 13 hours at night. He said, "I was reciting Gurbani aloud. An elderly person looked back to see if a cassette player was on; he was wondering who was doing *paatth* in the darkness at night. He was surprised that there was no light, so who was reciting *Bani* for three or four hours non-stop. I told him that by the grace of the Guru I had been able to memorise a lot of *Bani*. When I was young, I was very keen on wrestling. Seeing my interest, my father bought a sack of almonds as part of my strength building diet."

Bhai Raghbir Singh believes that the diet of almonds has helped his memory power as well. For that reason he has been able to commit to memory a lot of *Bani*. I request that every Gursikh should try to learn and commit to memory as much *Bani* as he can. The minimum are the *Banis* of Jap Ji Sahib and Rehras. The aim should be to learn by heart all the *Five Banis* of the *Nit Nem* and Sukhmani Sahib and as much other *Bani* as possible. The ancient Singhs knew by heart all *Banis*. When they were in wars against oppression, they recited Jaap Sahib in the battlefield and were always victorious. There were no *Gutkas* (small booklets of selected daily Banis) in those days. Now there are *Gutkas* and unfortunately many Gursikhs do not learn Bani by heart. If one has committed *Bani* to memory, one can recite it anywhere. *Gutkas* must be treated with respect. There are some houses where the *Gutkas* are not kept with respect. *Bani*, no matter in what form, must be held in great respect.

"Behold the Greatness of God O saints, He bestows honour on the lowly." (SGGS p. 735)

"My condition, O my True Guru, that condition, O Lord, is known only to You. I was wandering around lost, and no one cared for me. In the Company of the Guru, the True Guru, I, the worm, have been raised up and exalted." (SGGS p. 167)

The past bad deeds of a person are erased when that person does *matha tekan* before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If the Guru wishes then even the humble can be raised to a position of honour and respect. I have not been fit to do the duty of one of the *Panj Piaray*, but praise be to Guru Ji and that my weaknesses have been overlooked. Guru Ji has bestowed on us (the *Jatha*) the most exalted *sewa* of *Panj Piaray*. Guru Ji has given us the initiative and effort to go to many countries for *Amrit Sanchar* so that while we benefit from *Naam simran*, so we persuade others to benefit in the same way. We have been given the *sewa* of preaching *Sikhi*. Waheguru has given us the joy of doing *sewa*.

I join with Bhai Jarnail Singh, Bhai Raghbir Singh, Bhai Sohan Singh, Bhai Onkar Singh and many other Singhs and Singhanis for the *sewa* of *Amrit Sanchar*. When there are holidays in England or a Bank holiday, some call others for dinner, others watch television but the programme of the Gursikhs is to go and preach *Sikhi* in England and abroad. Bhai Jarnail Singh would drive the whole night and do *Naam simran*. When we reach our destination, we do *Raaen Subaaee Kirtan* and preach *Sangats* to follow Guru Ji's teachings, "If you do not accept the Guru's Word (i.e. become Guru *waalay*), then you will re-enter the cycle of birth and death."

Once I went to Thailand with the *Jatha*. On the return flight, there were quite a few of us Gursikhs together in the plane.

Suddenly, Bhai Raghubir Singh, who knows *Bani* by heart, started the *Nit Nem*. Everyone listened to the *Paatth* of the *Five Banis*, One Singh looked at the time and asked, "Bhai Sahib, why did you start the *Nit Nem* so early?" The England time at the time was 3.00 in the morning. In this way, due to force of habit, *Bani* is timed and recorded in the minds of Gursikhs and the *paatth* starts automatically; in the same way as tape recorders and radios start on timers these days.

"O Nanak, meeting the True Guru, the art (of harmonious living with the God's Name in the heart) is perfected. While laughing, playing, dressing and eating, one is liberated." (SGGS p. 522) (This is the Gurbani reference to the *miri/piri* (worldly/spiritual) ideology of *Sikhi* (see Glossary))

Gursikhs earn their living, bring up their families, raise their children, and after their marriages, spend their free time practising and preaching *Gursikhi*. This is the path to spiritual power. This is the true life style of Gursikhs.



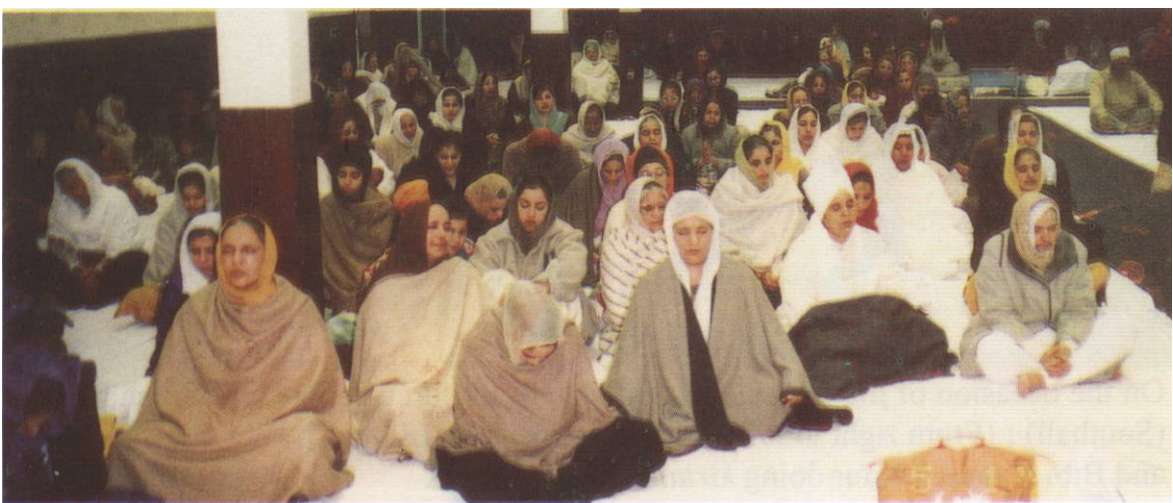
Those Gursikhs of England who established the Guru's House (Gurdwara) before buying their own houses. Those standing from left to right; S. Mohan Singh, S. Baldev Singh, S. Sarwan Singh, S. Amrik Singh, S. Surjit Singh, S. Ratan Singh and S. Bachan Singh. Those sitting from left to right; S. Gurdev Singh, S. Pritam Singh, S. Ajit Singh, Dr. S Tara Singh, Giani Balwant Singh and Harbans Singh.



During Simran on stage; Bhai Gursharan Singh, Bhai Rama Singh, Bibi Mohinder Kaur, Bhai Jagtar Singh, Bibi Ranjit Kaur, Bhai Jaspal Singh (playing tabla) and Bibi Bhajan Kaur.



Sangat meet for Simran every morning at Amrit Vela (see Glossary) at Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Southall). This programme has been going on from 1995.



The Sangat at Amrit Vela.



The Sangat assembled for Simran at Amrit vela at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall.



On the occasion of the first Raaen Subaaee by children at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall. From right to left; Bhai Hardip Singh (Slough), Bibi Gurleen Kaur and Bibi Kamaljit Kaur doing kirtan.



S. Kesar Singh Ji Mand's grandchildren in Gursikhi saroop are an outstanding example for the next generation. Taught by Giani Darshan Singh Ji Sohal, they have gained proficiency in classical Gurbani kirtan. Kaka Gursharan Singh can do kirtan in 18 Gurbani raags and also won the second prize in tabla in the 11 to 16 age group at the famous Harbalabh Mela at Jalandhar in year 2000.



Back row - Left to right; S. Kesar Singh Mand, S. Gurmukh Singh and S. Bhagat Singh.
Front row - Left to right; Ranjit Kaur Mand, Manvir Singh Mand, Jasmit Kaur Mand, Bhai Rama Singh Ji and Gursharan Singh Mand.



Bhai Balkar Singh Ji with Bhai Rama Singh Ji and children during the Sikhi workshop has given full support to this activity



Gurmat class of the Sikhi workshop children at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall. Children are taught about the Sikh religion in this class.



Savdeep Singh met Bhai Rama Singh at a Sikhi camp. After having discussion with Bhai Rama Singh his life changed from manmukh to Gurmukh. Savdeep Singh is pictured with Bhai Rama Singh and Savdeep's father Balkar Singh.



In Hounslow, London, Bhai Rama Singh Ji with Gursikhs from India. From right to left; Bhai Rama Singh, Bhai Bhupinder Singh, Bibi Bhupinder Kaur, Bhai Puran Singh, Bhai Harvinder Singh and Bibi Kulwant Kaur.



The indication of Khalsa Raj: When Bhai Rama Singh Ji, in a dreamlike vision had darshan (holy sight) of Sri Harmandar Sahib and the mysterious Khalsa (guide) showed him scenes of the achievements of Khalsa Raj.



When Bhai Rama Singh Ji, in his vision, had the blissful experience of doing Simran in the underground tunnel like structure prepared for this purpose by the Khalsa.



When Bhai Rama Singh Ji arrived in the U.K. there were only about four Singhs of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha. From about 1969-70 many members of the sangat drew closer to the Holy Feet (Presence) of the Guru (by taking Amrit). A photo of the Singhs and Singhanis at the time.

Divine Power

(*Kaamdhen Shakti* - According to Hindu mythology, Kaamdhen is a heavenly cow which appeared when the ocean was churned by the forces of good and evil (*devtas* and the *rakhshas*). It can grant any gift one desires and that is referred to as the power of *kaamdhen* or *Kaamdhen shakti*)

"The Lord is the Fulfiller of desires, the Giver of total peace; the *Kaamdhen*, the wish-fulfilling (mythological divine) cow, is in His power." (SGGS p. 669)

When cruelty and oppression increases in this world, then the Lord sends some *avtaar* (divine person) to destroy evil. You all know that Ram Chandar Ji built a bridge to cross the sea to free Sita (his wife). An ordinary person would wonder how this can be done. No means for building such bridges were available those days. This bridge was built by the divine power of God. It was not easy to challenge and defeat Rawan's huge army. There were only these two brothers, Ram Chandar and Lashman and the army of monkeys. Many weapons were needed for the war. All this was possible through the power of nature. Ram Chandar was victorious due to the backing of that Divine Power. In the same way, in the Age of *Duapar* (see *Yug* in Glossary), Krishan Bhagwan helped his childhood friend Sudama. Sudama was very poor. His wife suggested, "Ask for help from your friend. He is your childhood friend and will certainly help." Krishan Bhagwan asked Vishvakarma to convert Sudama's hut into a beautiful palace. This was done through the *Kaamdhen Shakti*. In the same way Dropadi's honour was saved in the full court (of the evil Kaurav brothers).

In the Age of *Kalyug* (see *Yug* in the Glossary), Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born. To humble the arrogant Vali Kandhari, Guru Ji drained away all the water of his well, down the hill. In anger, Vali Kandhari rolled down a huge stone on Guru Ji, and Guru Ji stopped it with the palm of his hand as if it were made of wax. In the same way, at Nanak Jhira, there was no arrangement for water. No one from another area would marry his daughter to anyone in that area. In answer to the prayer of the *Sangat* there, a water spring appeared with the touch of Guru Ji's holy feet. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji made the Mecca swing around with his divine power. In the same way, using the divine *Kaamdhen Shakti* Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji showed Bahadur Shah countless diamonds in the River Godavri. Also, when Guru Ji was about to leave the village of Shatiana, the servants grabbed the reins of Guru Ji's horse and asked for the back payment of their wages, "You keep taking us further and further under some excuse". (Guru Ji was travelling south to meet the Emperor.)

Guru's devoted Sikh, Daan Singh said to them, "Be patient, Guru Ji will pay you in full when the *Sangat* makes further donations." But they remained stubborn and said, "We shall not go further without receiving our wages." Hearing this Guru Ji caused a *kautak* (see Glossary) and a Gursikh appeared with asses laden with Gold coins. Guru Ji settled all accounts which had been outstanding for many months (Guru Ji had left the fort of Anandpur, was pursued by the forces of the evil Emperor and had gone through a period of great hardship in the preceding many months. Only few devoted Gursikhs stood by Guru Ji's side during this period). Guru Ji then said to his Gursikh Daan Singh, "Come Daan Singh let me settle your account also." Daan Singh replied with folded hands, "I have everything at home; recognise me as your servant and give me the gift of *Sikhi*." Guru Ji was pleased and said, "Bhai Daan Singh you have preserved the seed of *Sikhi*. With this seed, *Sikhi* will prosper."

All these *kautaks* are made possible by the *Kaamdhen Shakti* (Divine Power). Those who do *Naam simran* acquire such powers also.

The Chosen Five

(The exalted position of The Five in *Sikhi*)

Guru Gobind Singh Ji's tribute to His Khalsa (Guru Ji offered *langar* to the Khalsa (Singhs) before a Pundit who was present, and the latter was upset. Whereupon Guru Ji praised the Khalsa with this Shabad. We also need to remember Guru Ji's injunction that: *Khalsa Mero roop hai khaas; Khalsay may haon kron niwaas*: Khalsa is in my own image; I reside in the Khalsa):

"Wars were won by the favour of the Khalsa (the Singhs); By their generosity, charity was given. Sins are vanquished by their kindness. By their generosity, our storehouses are replenished. Through their favour we receive knowledge. By their support all our enemies are conquered. By them (their presence) I am exalted. Otherwise, there are millions of poor (humble) people like me (i.e. Guru Ji Himself). (*Khalsa Mehma* in *Dasam Granth* - *Dasam Granth* is collation of Bani attributed to Guru Gobind Singh Ji. This Granth, while greatly revered by the Sikhs, does not carry the authority of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji)

Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave the highest position to the *Panj Piaray*. Guru Ji himself humbly asked for *Amrit* from the *Panj Piaray* and vowed to sacrifice his whole family (and himself) for the Khalsa Panth. He accepted the "order" of the *Panj Piaray* and left the fortification of Chamkaur. When the time to go to *Sach Khand* (see Glossary) came, then Guru Ji's injunction to the Sangat was, "From today the Khalsa shall not recognise any person as Guru. From today the Guru shall be Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the Eternal Guru throughout all the Ages (*Yugs*). The *Panj Piaray* shall run the affairs of the *Panth*, by doing *Ardaas* (standing prayer) before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, reading the *Hukamnama* (Order) and following that *Hukamnama* after due consideration and interpretation." This, the Guru Ji repeated many times to the Singhs. However, few heed that injunction of Guru Ji. Thus, a weakened *Panth* (Khalsa organisation) cannot make progress or defend itself. The attack on Sri Harmandar Sahib Ji took place due to the weakness of the *Panth*.

When the British gave independence to India, they were prepared to divide India into three parts. They were prepared to make Khalistan, India (Hindustan) and Pakistan. Why did the Panth not seek Guru Ji's guidance through a *Hukamnama* (see Glossary) then? That was a serious mistake. They refused own rule. Such a responsible task should have been handed over to the *Panj Piaray*, why were only two individuals, Baldev Singh and Master Tara Singh sent for negotiations? Even the two who were sent were not true followers of *Sikhi rehat*. Although, in appearance, Master Tara Singh was a Sikh, he did not have true affection for *Sikhi*. If he had loved his faith then he would have surely done something for the *Panth*. As for Baldev Singh, he was not even an *Amritdhari*.

Was the *Panth* not aware that such a huge and responsible task had been placed in the hands of these two? There were so many highly qualified doctors, engineers, lawyers and generals in the Sikh nation. Despite all that education, they did not think about the longer term interest of their own nation. If the lead had been in the hands of *Panj Piaray* they would have certainly thought about what was best for the *Panth*. When talks took place in London then Baldev Singh went alone. The British called Baldev Singh and said, "We would like to divide India into three parts. We propose to offer you Khalistan." He told this message, given to him in confidence, to Nehru. Nehru was very cunning; he sent Baldev Singh back saying, "We will negotiate on your behalf." To keep Tara Singh quiet, Nehru put a necklace of gold around his neck. Tara Singh was satisfied with that.

For a gold necklace, he sold the whole Sikh nation. Tara Singh said, "Nehru Ji, we are with you." Nehru Ji said, "You do not need Khalistan; all India is yours."

After the independence of India, Tara Singh went to Nehru and asked for a Punjabi Suba (state). Nehru did not keep his promise and said that it was too late for that. In any case, why did Tara Singh want a Punjabi Suba? Hearing this, Tara Singh was confounded, realising that the Sikhs had been betrayed. That the Sikhs were being offered own rule and now Nehru was not prepared to consider even a Punjabi Suba (within India). Tara Singh said, "If you do not make a Punjabi Suba then I shall go on a hunger strike." He returned to Punjab and stopped eating. One week passed. Nehru Ji promoted Tara Singh's son-in-law to a high rank in the army and held a party, and went over to Tara Singh's daughter and said, "You ask me to do things for you, why don't you persuade your daddy to eat food; do you want him to die? You should offer him food secretly." That is what Tara Singh's daughter did. Sometimes she would feed him *prashaad* (sweet dish) and at other times ask him to drink juice. Four or five weeks passed and the newspaper reporters came thinking that after all this time Tara Singh must be close to death. They weighed him and were surprised to note that in fact his weight had increased instead of decreasing! Seeing this the reporters said, "This is all a sham."

It is most surprising that Tara Singh did not think of anything constructive or do anything for the Sikh nation, yet he remained the President of the Akali Dal. If anyone had behaved in the same way in another country, no one would have cared about such a person. One day, I saw a news cutting on the notice board at the Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Southall. In a picture on this cutting Tara Singh was sitting on an old *desi* bed (*manji*) surrounded by dogs. If he had asked for Khalistan, police guards would have surrounded him.

Then Sant Fateh Singh became excited that Tara Singh could not get a Punjabi Suba, but he would show him how to get it from Nehru. He announced that if the Punjabi Suba was not made by such and such a date, he would burn himself to death. He also started thinking of some excuse for saving his life. A few days before the deadline, Nehru sent the Speaker of the Parliament, Hukam Singh, with two other Singhs, to say to Sant Ji that the demand for the Punjabi Suba had been accepted. He was told, "Do not go through with your threat to burn yourself." Fateh Singh was, of course, looking for such an excuse. Cunningly, Nehru gave him an excuse not to keep his promise but did not give him anything else. This was just another joke with the Panth. If the Panth keeps getting leaders of this type, then self-rule will not be achieved.

Panj Piaray give Amrit. They admit devotees to the Order of the Khalsa. *Panj Piaray* lead the *Nagar Kirtan* (local Kirtan) procession. If someone is in pain or suffering of any type then the *Panj Piaray* do *Ardaas* (prayer or supplication) and it is only through the guidance of the *Panj Piaray* that we can ensure the rising spirit (*chardhi Kala*) of the Panth.

Guru of All Religions

"Waheguru Waheguru Waheguru You are Wonderful."

(Due to the heading of this chapter, the names of the Gurus and Bhagats of the following Shabads from Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the "Guru of All Religions", are given. "In all there are 36 authors of Guru Granth Sahib, representing a geo- religious and social cross section of the Indian society from the 12th to the 17th centuries CE.)

You are lotus-eyed, with sweet speech, exalted and embellished with millions of companions. Mother Yashoda invited You as Krishna to eat the sweet rice. Gazing upon Your supremely beautiful form, and hearing the musical sounds of Your silver bells tinkling, she was intoxicated with delight. Death's pen and command are in Your hands. Tell me, who can erase Your Command? Shiva and Brahma yearn to enshrine Your spiritual wisdom in their hearts. You are forever True, the Home of Excellence, the Primal Supreme Being. Waheguru Waheguru Waheguru You are Wonderful." (Guru Ram Das Ji: SGGS p. 1402)

"Farid, musk is released at night. Those who are sleeping do not receive their share. Those whose eyes are heavy with sleep, how can they receive it?" (Bhagat Farid Ji: SGGS p. 1382)

"Please do not forget Him; please do not forget me, please do not forget me, O Lord. || 1 || Pause || The temple priests have doubts about this, and everyone is furious with me. Calling me low-caste and untouchable, they beat me and drove me out; what should I do now, O Beloved Father Lord? || 1 || If You liberate me after I am dead, no one will know that I am liberated. These Pandits, these religious scholars, call me low-born; when they say this, they tarnish Your Honour as well. || 2 || You are called Kind and Compassionate; the power of Your Arm is absolutely unrivalled. The Lord turned the temple around to face Naam Dev; He turned His back on the Brahmins." (Bhagat Nam Dev Ji: SGGS p. 1292)

"The company I keep is wretched and low, and I am anxious day and night; my actions are crooked, and I am of lowly birth. || 1 || O Lord, Master of the earth, Life of the soul, please do not forget me! I am Your humble servant. || 1 || Pause || Take away my pains, and bless Your humble servant with Your Sublime Love. I shall not leave Your Feet, even though my body may perish. || 2 || Says Ravidas, I seek the protection of Your Sanctuary; please, meet Your humble servant, do not delay." (Bhagat Nam Dev Ji: SGGS p. 345)

"Branded with a thousand marks of disgrace, Indra cried in shame. Paras Raam returned home crying. Ajai wept, when he was made to eat the manure he had given, pretending it was charity. Such is the punishment received in the Court of the Lord. Rama wept when he was sent into exile, and separated from Sita and Lakhshman. The ten-headed Raawan, who stole away Sita with the beat of his tambourine, wept when he lost Sri Lanka. The Paandavas once lived in the Presence of the Lord; they were made slaves, and wept. Janmayjaa wept, that he had lost his way. One mistake, and he became a sinner. The Shaykhs, Pirs and spiritual teachers weep; at the very last instant, they suffer in agony. The kings weep, their ears are pierced; they go begging from house to house. The miser weeps; he has to leave behind the wealth he has gathered. The Pandit, the religious scholar, weeps when his learning is gone. The young woman weeps because she has no husband. O Nanak, the whole world is suffering. He alone is victorious, who believes in the Lord's Name. No other action is of any account." (Guru Nanak Dev Ji: SGGS p. 953)

O' people of India, pause and think; you did not set Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji alone on fire; you also set on fire Ram Krishan and the Bhagats. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji says in his Bani:-

"I have seen all places, but none can compare to You. The Primal Lord, the Architect of Destiny, has established You; thus You are adorned and embellished. Ramdasapur is prosperous and thickly populated, and incomparably beautiful. O Lord! Bathing in the Sacred Pool of Raam Daas, the residues of sins are washed away, O Nanak." (SGGS p. 1362)

Sri Harmandar Sahib is located on that holiest of the holy land, where great saints meditated for many Yugs (Vedic Ages, see Glossary). Such a place of worship of God will not be found in any part of the world. People come from all over the world to see this place. Anyone who is truly religious loves all religions. Why did Indra Gandhi order an attack on this place? It would not have been too difficult for the government to have arrested Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwaalay. However, she was bent on destroying the Sikh religion. Many people celebrated. The Department of Excise distributed a large quantity of liqueur to the military to celebrate the event.

The military was given a free hand to inflict as much loss on the Sikhs as possible. It is worth remembering that Sant Jarnail Singh was in Amritsar, but why were the other Gurdwaras in Punjab attacked? It was clear that this was a conspiracy to destroy the Sikh religion.

"The will of God hath ordained the Order of the Khalsa This is the final commandment to all Sikhs
Accept Granth as the Guru
Deem the revered Guru Granth as the visible body of all Gurus
Whosoever desire to feel His presence
Search and merge in the revelation itself
The Khalsa shall rule and none shall successfully defy them.
All shall surrender after bitter frustration.
For the world shall eventually be redeemed through the protection that the Order of the Khalsa alone affords." (Ardaas and Rehatnamas)

However, who can destroy the Panth which has been established by Akaal Purakh (God) Himself? No one can destroy the Sikh nation ("Translation note: "Nation" is a very rough translation of the word kaum in Punjabi. The word kaum describes "nation" in the western sense, but less, in that a kaum has the potential to be a legal constitutional nation in the modern sense but is not quite a nation; yet much more, in that a kaum is an ethnic, lingual and cultural entity often sharing the same religious ideology as in the case of the Sikhs of Punjab. "Khalsa Panth" includes the "Panjabi Sikh Kaum" as well as the global Sikh community in eluding the non-Punjabis e.g. white American Khalsa. When Guru Gobind Singh Ji wrote to the Emperor Aurungzeb, that the Brara Kaum obeyed his command (Zaffarnama), he was referring to the Brar Kaum which occupied a certain area in Punjab. Here, he was also asserting his position of miri (temporal power and authority). Therefore when discussing the miri/piri twin ideals of Sikhi, we need to beware of misleading western terms like nation, democracy etc. Sikh ideology should be studied in its own context as an advanced model towards which humanity continues to aspire and not forced into some current and changing westernised moulds. It is time we understood our own great heritage.)

Cruelty With Truth Itself

In *Kalyug* (see Glossary), the Muslims ruled India for 700 years. Emperor Jahangir tortured to death the symbol of peace and tranquillity, Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Guru Ji had committed no offence. Guru Ji was tortured because Chandu spoke ill of Guru Ji. Aurungzeb martyred Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji at Chandni Chauk in Delhi. These emperors clashed with the righteous cause of religion and their rule was destroyed. The British ruled in India for two hundred years. Their rule was reasonably just and people were generally free from fear. However, they too then clashed with religion. They sided with the Mahants and attacked Nankana Sahib (Mahants - Misguided descendants of priests who had taken over Gurdwaras during the Sikh freedom struggle in the eighteenth century). Mahant Narain Das used to drink liquor and do bad deeds in the Nanakana Sahib Gurdwara.

When a Sindhi family came for *darshan* (holy sight) of the Gurdwara, the Mahant and his thugs misbehaved towards the ladies. The Mahant did sinful things in the Gurdwara. When the Singhs found out they protested. Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabar and Bhai Lashman Singh Dharowal took a Jatha of 150 Singhs to bring the Mahant to the right path. When the Mahant found out, with the support of the British general, he attacked the Jatha and killed all Singhs. The British clashed with religion and they too lost their rule in India.

No one gives independence to those who try to get it by fasts; for the freedom of the country, the Singhs sacrificed countless lives. All religions joined together to free the country so that the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian could be independent and could live happily. In the new regime (i.e. independent India) all religions should have been able to co-exist happily. Instead of happiness, other religions have been attacked. All religions joined together to raise a beautiful palace, but Indra Gandhi and Zail Singh set fire to the palace before departing. Fire is fire after all. Fire will destroy everything. To keep appearances Indra Gandhi believed in religion, but inside she was a Communist; it is only for that reason that she ordered an attack on Amritsar. To order an attack on this holy place is not an ordinary thing. The whole country will have to suffer as a result. India would suffer a great loss (of property and lives) if a storm comes, a disease spreads or some country invades India. A regime that inflicts cruelty destroys itself.

"A fortress like that of Lanka, with the ocean as a moat around it, there is no longer any news of that house of Raavan. || 1 || What shall I ask for? Nothing is permanent. I see with my eyes that the world is passing away. || 1 || Pause || Thousands of sons and thousands of grandsons, but in that house of Raavan, the lamps and wicks have gone out. || 2 || The moon and the sun cooked his food. The fire washed his clothes. || 3 || Under Guru's Instructions, one whose mind is filled with the Lord's Name, becomes permanent, and does not go anywhere. || 4 || Says Kabir, listen, people: without the Lord's Name, no one is liberated. || 5 ||" (SGGS p. 481)

Raavan was so powerful; the capital of his country (now Sri Lanka) was made of gold.

He had a hundred thousand sons and one hundred and twenty-five thousand grandsons. His son Meghnath was very powerful. Raavan made one mistake. He took away the wife of Ram Chandar. A battle took place between Sri Ram Chandar and Raavan. On one side was Ram Chandar, Lashman, Hanuman and the army of monkeys and on the other was Raavan's whole army and all his family. No one from the Raavan's family survived this war. Sri Ram Chandar Ji was victorious for truth is always the winner. In the same way (for seeking justice), Sri Krishan Bhagwan went to Daryodhan saying, "Pandavs are your brothers; if not half the kingdom, give them five villages."

Daryodhan replied, "Forget five villages, I shall not give them even land equal to the eye of a needle." Daryodhan was very arrogant. His judgement had become so clouded that he did not even care for the honour of his own family. In the full court he asked for Dropadi (the wife of the Pandavs) to be stripped naked. Krishan Bhagwan protected her honour. Daryodhan thought that all were with him, he was all powerful; the Pandavs were insignificant and had no power. He thought he was bound to win. Krishan Bhagwan stood with the truth.

Truth always wins. Pandavs were victorious. Anyone who sins has to suffer the consequences. In their conceit, Rawan and Daryodan followed an evil path and their kingdoms were destroyed. These examples are very old. Take today's example; how great was the power of Russia. The country was world's top power and full of arrogance, that no one could match it. Big nuclear bombs were made. Drunk with this power, the country forgot God. Such was the miracle of nature that the country was divided into pieces. These Communists clashed with God that there is no such Power. They do not believe in any religion. Indra also followed their thinking and ordered the attack on Darbar Sahib. Russia broke up into pieces after this attack. In the same way India too will break up. Any regime that inflicted cruelty on the ordinary people was destroyed in due course.

The Ardaas Of Gursikhs

Once, quite suddenly, my health deteriorated. I had a severe fever that would just not return to normal. The family doctor checked me. Seeing my condition becoming worse, Bhai Jagtar Singh Ji, Bhai Avtar Singh Ji and Bhai Gursharan Singh Ji consulted together and decided to get me checked up by a private doctor. Bhai Gursharan Singh took me to another doctor. The doctor, after his diagnosis told Gursharan Singh that my condition was really bad and that I would not last for more than a few days. He gave a week at the most. However, Gursharan Singh did not tell me this. Seeing the medical report, the doctor was surprised that despite such a bad condition, no single cause could be determined. There could be a problem with the kidney; it could be blood pressure; or it could be a heart problem. He advised that I should be taken to the hospital for further examinations. A full diagnosis was carried out at the hospital. They suspected some heart problem and checked for that a number of times, but without success. Suddenly, one day, I started reciting *simran* with every breath (see *swas-swas simran* in the Glossary). Due to the positive influence of *simran*, despite my very poor condition, I was not feeling any pain. With the *swas-swas simran*, my *swas* started to reverse inwards to the brain and I felt a slight itch on the forehead (just above the nose).

"You brawling ignorant person of uncultured intellect reverse your breath and turn it inward. Let your mind be intoxicated with the stream of Ambrosial Nectar which trickles from the furnace of the Tenth Gate." (SGGS p. 23)

As my *swas* reversed inwards, I thought the time for departure (from this life) had arrived. At this time Bhai Jagtar Singh and Bibi Raminder Kaur were sitting near me. I told them to go home. Jagtar Singh was surprised to hear this, thinking that they had just arrived and now they were being asked to leave. He suspected that there was a reason. That perhaps my *simran* was going on and I wanted to be alone. That perhaps my mind was at one with Waheguru. They returned home.

I pray, that when the end seems near, one should meditate single-mindedly on Waheguru. The mind flits about so quickly that if gets caught in affection and material attachment, then the soul will get trapped in cycles of birth and death. For example, affection for a child or woman (or man) should not awaken. Those who keep their mind on worldly attachment are reborn again and again. In that case, the *gurmukhs* (Sikhs devoted to the Guru) would return to a human life but those who do not do *simran* and keep engrossed in wealth and material things, return to the life of a snake. Those who keep their minds on children are reborn pigs. As in Gurbani, Bhagat Trilochan Ji says:-

"At the very last moment, one who thinks of wealth, and dies in such thoughts, shall be born over and over again, in the form of serpents. || 1 || O sister, do not forget the Name of the Lord of the Universe. || Pause || At the very last moment, he who thinks of women, and dies in such thoughts, shall be born over and over again as a prostitute. || 2 || At the very last moment, one who thinks of his children, and dies in such thoughts, shall be born over and over again as a pig. || 3 || At the very last moment, one who thinks of mansions, and dies in such thoughts, shall be born over and over again as a goblin. || 4 || At the very last moment, one who thinks of the Lord, and dies in such thoughts, says Trilochan, that man shall be liberated; the Lord shall abide in his heart. || 5 ||" (SGGS p. 526)

I have seen many strange happenings of this type. If towards the end of life, the mind wanders towards someone then the soul gets caught in the rebirth cycle. I was in India when a *Gursikh* passed away suddenly. At the last moment he looked around at his family and said. "My daughter is not here." His daughter was in England. As he thought of his daughter at the last moment, so he was reborn a girl in his daughter's family. In the same way a *Gursikh* who recited *Bani* and did *Kirtan*, thought of his daughter in his dying moments, he too was reborn as the daughter of his daughter.

"The woman is transformed into a man, and the men into women. Says Kabir, God is the Beloved of the Holy Saints. I am a sacrifice to His image." (SGGS p. 1252)

When the *Gursikhs* found out that my condition was bad then all got together to do *Ardaas* for my recovery. Wherever the *Gursikhs* were, in England, Canada, America, New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and India, they did *Ardaas*. Bhai Jiwan Singh arranged for a *Raaen Subaaee* and *Ardaas*. Giani Amolak Singh Ji called the *Gursikhs* to Martindale Gurdwara, held a *Kirtan* programme and said an *Ardaas*. At Clifton Road Gurdwara too Bhai Prithipal Singh arranged for *Paatths* of Sukhmani Sahib and Baba Jaswant Singh did an *Ardaas*. As a result of the *Ardaas* by all these *Gursikhs*, I got a new life. There is great power in the *Ardaas* of *Gursikhs*. Giani Amolak Singh Ji recited the *Ardaas* from the depths of his heart: -

(The translation of the standard phrases of this *Ardaas* are based on the approved translation by the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee to ensure uniformity of interpretation.)

Ik Onkar, Sri Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

(Starts with Positive numerical 1) 1. O Formless-Form To Waheguru, the abiding victory May the Divine Spirit help. Ballad (Vaar) *Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki* of the Tenth King (Guru Gobind Singh).

To begin with, invoke the Divine Spirit of Waheguru and remember Guru Nanak.

(This spirit) which then inspired Guru Angad, Amar Das and Ram Das

Call upon Arjan, Hargobind and revered Har Rai

Invoke Sri Harkishan whose vision heals all pains

Call upon Tegh Bahadur so that the kingdom of heaven may come to earth (*Nao nidh* are the "nine" treasures of life. This is an idiomatic expression for the good qualities and skills required for a successful life and the expression derives from Vedic literature)

May Waheguru and the Gurus assist us everywhere.

Tenth King revered Guru Gobind Singh Ji, May He help us everywhere.

"The Word, the Bani is Guru, and Guru is the Bani. Within the Bani, the Ambrosial Nectar is contained: If His humble servant believes, and acts according to the Words of the Guru's Bani, then the Guru, in reality, emancipates him." (SGGS p. 982)

The spirit of all the Ten Kings enshrined in the visible body and the Word of the Guru Granth, concentrate on that and Khalsa Ji say: "Waheguru."

The Five Beloved Ones; four Princes; Forty Redeemed Ones; those who have remained steadfast in suffering; those who kept constant remembrance of Waheguru; those who renounced the sensuous pleasures; those who have constantly lived in the Divine presence; shared earnings; expressed magnanimity; have persevered in their fight in the cause of justice; turned a blind eye to the fault and failings of others and did not falter

Concentrate your minds on the struggles and achievements of those, O, revered members of the Order of the Khalsa, and say: "Waheguru".

The Singhs and Singhanis who courted martyrdom in the cause of religion and underwent unspeakable sufferings of being dismembered alive; scalped alive; broken on the wheels; sawed alive and boiled alive; and those who made sacrifices in the service of the centres of the Sikh religion, the Gurdwaras, but never wavered in their faith and remained steadfast in the cause of *Sikhi* to the last hair of their body and to their last breath

Think of the Five Seats of Authority, the Thrones of the religion and all the Gurdwaras and say Waheguru! Waheguru!

First, the prayer of the whole Khalsa is,
May the presence of Waheguru be progressively felt in the hearts of all Khalsa
And may the whole creation become happy and prosperous thereby
May the supplies of the Khalsa ever remain replenished
May the sword of the Khalsa be ever victorious
May the royal title of the Khalsa be universally recognised and honoured
May victory attend upon all just endeavours of the Panth, the Khalsa commonwealth
May Waheguru's might (Sri Sahib) be our constant ally
May the Order of the Khalsa achieve ever expanding progress and supremacy
Say Waheguru! Waheguru!

Grant to Sikhs: the gift of faith; the gift of uncut hair; the gift of discipline; gift of knowledge; the gift of mutual trust; the gift of self confidence and the supreme gift of all gifts, the gift of communion with Waheguru.

May Sikhs freely centre around and dip in the holy lake of Amritsar Sikh concerts, the banners, dwelling houses, ever remain inviolate May the cause of truth and justice prevail everywhere and at all times;
Khalsa Ji, utter "Waheguru"

May the passions in the minds of the Sikhs remain calm and the reason flow clear and may the reason always be guided by the Light of Waheguru.

O, Almighty Protector and Helper of the Panth, restore to us the right and privilege of unhindered management and free service of access to Nankana Sahib and other centres of the Sikh religion, the Gurdwaras, out of which we have been forcibly evicted.

O' True father of all, Lord, Waheguru here is a prayer

Grant us the company of those who may help keep thy Name in our hearts.

Forgive us our remissnesses
Extend Thy helping hand to all and everyone.

(Specific part of the Ardaas for my health)

"O' Redeemer of sinners' O' Treasure House of Charity, Kin of the poor; True Guru, Lord and True King:

"When your soul is feeling sad, offer your prayers to the Guru."
(SGGS p. 519)

O' True Guru, who bestows honour on the low, due to your great blessing and kindness, True Guru, Lord, the evening *Diwan* (see Glossary) has been attended by your grace. O' King, this holy *Diwan* has been held for a prayer for Your devoted servant Bhai Sahib Bhai Rama Singh Ji, who, due to physical ailment has been admitted to the hospital; O' True Lord, eliminate the pain and suffering of your child and servant. O' the One Who elevates the poor, give the gift of *swas-swas simran* (see Glossary). Keep his concentration on Your holy feet. O' King:

"The Perfect Divine Guru has removed my sorrow. He blesses His servant with His service."
(SGGS p. 191)

With Your Grace grant your servant good health. O' True King, in Your presence, the Sangat, immersed in his loving affection and hopeful of his physical good health, have prayed through Kirtan and Ardaas. Accept the Ardaas of the Sangat O' True King and place your kind hand on Your servant's head. O' Lord True King, grant him the boon of concentration and meditation through *swas-swas simran*. O' Lord True King, let Your beloved one always keep his mind on Your holy feet. O' True King at this time, this is the Ardaas of the evening Diwan, *Ardaas* of the completion of *Kirtan*, forgive any mistakes when doing *Kirtan*, accept the singing (of Your praises) and the hearing (of the same), take into account the attendance and the offerings, bless everyone with the gifts of *Naam* and *Sikhi*, grant spiritual and physical health, bless the children with *Sikhi* and *Naam*, grant families with the *Gurmatt* way of life, O' King at this time the *Deg* of *Karah Prasadd* prepared from Your gifted treasure, is placed in your presence, let it be accepted at your door.

"I have prepared all sorts of foods in various ways, and all sorts of sweet deserts. I have made my kitchen pure and sacred. Now, O my Sovereign Lord King, please sample my food."
(SGGS p. 1266)

Grant *Sangat* the *Prasaad* accepted by You. O' King, money has been donated for your Clothes (*Rumalas*). Please accept. O' the One Who elevates the poor, True King, protect our honour (cover our weaknesses), fill our coffers; O' King, always grant us Your favours. Let there be happiness and contentment. Bless us with your holy *Hukamnama* (see Glossary). Let whosoever comes to Your door return contented and healthy. Let anyone who stands against (the righteous) cause of Khalsa Panth be destroyed; anyone who seeks protection be saved."

(Return to main Ardaas)

May the Name, the religion preached by Nanak, prevail and prosper, forever and forever

May Thy Will be done wherein lies the good of all The Khalsa is of Waheguru And to Waheguru the victory

The will of God hath ordained the Order of the Khalsa This is the final commandment to all Sikhs
Accept Granth as the Guru

Deem the revered Guru Granth as the visible body of all Gurus

Whosoever desire to feel His presence

Search and merge in the revelation itself

The Khalsa shall rule and none shall successfully defy them.

All shall surrender after bitter frustration.

For the world shall eventually be redeemed through the protection that the Order of the Khalsa alone affords.

Whosoever utter will be blessed

"The Eternal God is the One and Only Reality".

The *Hukamnama* after the Ardaas was: -

"Some people have others, but I am forlorn and dishonoured; I have only You, Lord. I might as well just die crying, if You will not come into my mind. || 1 || Mahala 2: When there is peace and pleasure, that is the time to remember your Husband Lord. In times of suffering and pain, remember Him then as well. Says Nanak, O wise bride, this is the way to meet your Husband Lord. || 2 || *Pauree*: I am a worm, how can I praise You, O Lord; Your glorious greatness is so great! You are inaccessible, merciful and unapproachable; You Yourself unite us with Yourself. I have no other friend except You; in the end, You alone will be my Companion and Support. You save those who enter Your Sanctuary. O Nanak, He is care-free; He has no greed at all."
(SGGS p. 791)

New Life

The time for departure came. The *swas* (the breath of life) started going upwards. Suddenly my ethereal body escaped through the *dasam dwar* (*tenth gate* in the brain - see Glossary) like a fireworks rocket flying towards the sky. I saw my ethereal body, looking just like my real body, going higher and higher; faster than any aircraft made to date. The ethereal body has eyes and ears. The tongue is reciting *swas-swas simran*. On the way, I saw such views as are not to be seen on this earth. The further I went the more beautiful the scenes.

"On that path where the miles cannot be counted, there, the Name of the Lord shall be your sustenance." (SGGS p. 264)

I do not know where I reached. After a long time, I saw a beautiful palace. I was surprised to note that there were no pillars holding up the palace. If we make a house on this earth we base it on sound foundation so that it would not fall. There was a pleasant aroma drifting from the palace. Such an aroma is not to be found on this earth. It was many times more pleasant than the smell of the sandalwood tree. I was thinking, "What is this palace made of?" I went a bit further and I saw a *Shaheed* Singh (spirit of a martyr Singh). He said, "Khalsa Ji, you have travelled a long distance; drink some juice." I saw a glass. I took the glass and started drinking. I had never tasted such delicious juice before. As I drank the juice the glass disappeared. I asked for another. The second glass too disappeared as I finished drinking from it. After drinking juice, I asked the *Shaheed* Singh, "How come this palace is standing without pillars?" The *Shaheed* Singh replied, "This is *Sach Khand* (the Plain of Truth) and the palace is standing on the support of Waheguru's *Naam*."

The *Naam* is the Support of all creatures. The *Naam* is the Support of the earth and solar systems." (SGGS p. 284)

For this reason it has no supports. As the earth, the moon and the sun are stable without supports. They too are stable due to *Naam*. The *Shaheed* Singh said, "Khalsa Ji, you have reached here due to the support of *swas-swas simran*. However to reach the final destination humility is required."

"One whose heart is mercifully blessed with abiding humility, O Nanak, is liberated here, and obtains peace hereafter." (SGGS p. 278)

"Guru Nanak Dev Ji brought two gifts from *Sach Khand*, *Naam* and humility. For example, if you wish to go to another country then you need money, passport and visa. If you have no money then how would you buy the ticket? If there is no visa then they do not allow you to enter the other country and you are sent back."

The *Shaheed* Singh said, "The *Ardaas* of the Gursikhs has been accepted at *Sach Khand* (the Court of Waheguru), you still have some life to live. Go back and earn humility. You do have true wealth of *simran* (money) and *sewa* (passport), but you do not have the visa of humility. Clean the shoes of the *Sangat* and earn humility." Saying these words the *Shaheed* Singh disappeared and I returned to my earthly body.

"God, the Great Giver, has become merciful; He has listened to my prayer. He has saved His servant, and put ashes into the mouth of the slanderer. || 1 || No one can threaten you now, O my humble friend, for you are the slave of the Guru. The Supreme Lord God reached out with His

Hand and saved you. || 1 || Pause || The One Lord is the Giver of all beings; there is no other at all. Nanak prays, You are my only strength, God. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 818)

"The Supreme Lord God, through the Divine Guru, has Himself protected and preserved His children. Celestial peace, tranquillity and bliss have come to pass; my service has been perfect. || 1 || Pause || God Himself has heard the prayers of His humble devotees. He dispelled my disease, and rejuvenated me; His glorious radiance is so great! || 1 || He has forgiven me for my sins, and interceded with His power. I have been blessed with the fruits of my mind's desires; Nanak is a sacrifice to Him. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 819)

It is surprising that on returning to my body I did not sleep for a week. I did not feel any tiredness and I did not feel hungry. If a person does not sleep even for a day then he gets headache. The body becomes lethargic, but I was well. The doctor confirmed this. I was concerned about not being able to sleep. I took a sleeping tablet from the doctor but it had no effect. I sensed a harmonious musical rhythm in my whole being which seemed to satisfy all my needs. Then I remembered, that I was not feeling tired because of the juice which the *Shaheed* Singh offered me. I did not feel hungry nor did I feel the need for sleep. Those who do *Naam simran*, their hunger and thirst are quenched.

Prayer of the Parents

(A)

Bhai Prabhjot Singh in America is a doctor. We stayed at his house when we went to America. His father told me, "Together with his studies, he also became interested in Kirtan. He was very good in his studies and always did well in his studies. We always prayed to Guru Ji to save him from bad company. I would say Ardaas to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, "O' True King, I am only the worldly father, you are the True Father. Save him from the ill wind of *Kalyug*. Do not distance this child from the Sikhi *maryada* (way of life). He should not be affected by bad company; let him be saved from such company." He always used to do *NitNem* from childhood. Now Guru Ji bestowed on him the gift of Amrit. He started doing *Kirtan*. His wife also performs melodious Kirtan. They both go to other countries to do *sewa*. The younger son is also devoted to *Guru Ghar* (Guru's House or Gurdwara). He has qualified as an engineer with Guru Ji's blessing.

(B)

The Sikh nation has produced countless diamonds. The nation has produced highly qualified doctors, engineers, lawyers and generals. Amongst these is Dr. Jaspal Singh Kooner, a heart specialist. When I was very ill he treated me. I was very pleased when I saw him with his Sikh identity. There were eight students with him. He asked them to check me by turns and to let him know their diagnosis. I was very pleased to see how this *Gursikh* was representing the Sikh religion to others through his own Gursikh identity and the respect that he earned. I was delighted that there are such diamonds in the Sikh nation.

One day I went to deposit the donations from the morning *simran* and Dr Kooner's father was sitting there. I asked him if his son was Dr Kooner. He confirmed. I said, "Your son has spread the good name of the Sikh community."

His father told me, "When we lived in East Africa, he was very good in his studies. The head master made him the class monitor. On arriving in England he worked hard day and night and became a heart specialist. He managed to get employed in a reputable hospital. We advised him that he would not get much income from service and that he should open his own private practice. On hearing this he said, "I am keen to serve people; if I open a private surgery then only the rich would come there and that will not satisfy my desire to serve."

His father said, "He regards all as equal no matter which religion one belongs."

I said, "This is a great community service. Your son is highly skilled and there is talk of his skill in every home. I have heard many say that if someone gets ill, that person should get checked by Dr. Kooner."

"Those who walk on the Path of Truth shall be praised throughout the world."
(SGGS p. 136)

(C)

"O son, this is your mother's hope and prayer, that you may never forget the Lord, Har, Har, even for an instant. May you ever vibrate upon the Lord of the Universe." (SGGS p. 496)

Bhai Harminder Singh does the *sewa* of the tabla (drums which keep beat with Gurbani Kirtan) every Sunday morning. For two or three weeks he did not attend Gurdwara and I was asked by

many in the *Sangat* why he had not come; that with his tabla playing, the *simran* became more enjoyable. I explained that he was on holidays.

One day Harminder Singh came to see me and I mentioned to him that the *Sangat* enjoyed his tabla. I asked him, "Who taught you tabla and how did you get interested?" He told me, "Bhai Bahadur Singh, Bhai Davinder Singh and Bhai Jaspal Singh were at college with me. One day they performed very harmonious Kirtan at Southall. Hearing them, I too became interested in learning tabla. When I started learning tabla, my parents were worried that my studies would be affected."

I asked him, "Did you have any difficulty with your studies when you were learning tabla?" He said, "Children's minds are very sharp and if they have an interest in something, they learn quickly. I realised that study was important; television can be seen later. When my results arrived, I did well and my parents were delighted; I continued to do well every year."

Harminder Singh told me, "When I was little, I fell ill. My mother would travel daily from Southall to Charring Cross Hospital to comb my hair. I told my mother, "You come so far to comb my hair, why don't you get it cut?" My mother explained the great importance of hair and said, "Bhai Taru Singh preferred his scalp to be cut out but not his hair. Hair is an essential part of Sikh faith. The Sikhs have made great sacrifices for hair. This is Guru Ji's praise that a Sikh can be recognised from thousands." After that incident, I never thought of cutting my hair. My father, Sardar Sarjit Singh Bilga and mother Gurbachan Kaur have great faith in *Guru Ghar*. There were other Gursikh boys with me at the college and I was even more encouraged to retain the Sikh identity."

PART 4 - KHALSA RAJ

(Rule of the Khalsa)

The Ideal Khalsa Society

Preparations for Khalsa Raj

Emperor Aurungzeb was forcibly converting the Pandits to Muslims, and the Kashmiri Pandits came to the court of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji at Anandpur Sahib, and complained, that their religion was in danger of extinction. They pleaded for protection. By this time Guru Ji's son *Sahibzada* Gobind Rai came (Before His *Amrit* initiation by the *Panj Piaray* on the Vaisakhi day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji's name was Gobind Rai). He saw the Pandits looking distressed and asked, "Father, why are these people looking so sad?"

Guru Ji replied, "Their religion is in danger. Sacrifice of a saintly person is called for."

Gobind Rai said, "Father, there is no other person holier than you who can protect their religion." On hearing this from his worthy nine year old son, Guru Ji was greatly pleased and said to the Pandits, "Go and tell Aurungzeb, "If the inhabitant of Anandpur, Guru Tegh Bahadur accepts Islam, then we will do the same." *Honour of India*, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, gave his life to save the religion of the Hindus (Hinduism was in danger at that time. Of course, Guru Ji would have done the same if some other religion had been threatened, for Gurbani praises all paths (religions) leading to God. The great sacrifice of Guru Ji was for the freedom of a basic human right, that is the right to be able to practise one's own religion without fear).

When Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred, it was also announced, "Anyone who touches his body will receive the same treatment." At that time no Sikh came forward who would do the cremation of Guru Ji's holy body; all were frightened of Aurungzeb.

Suddenly, a dark dust storm came. Taking advantage of this darkness, Bhai Jaita Ji picked up Guru Ji's holy head and travelled to Anandpur at night. The holy body of Guru Ji was taken by a trader Sikh in his cart to his house, where he set fire to the house and thus cremated the body. Gurdwara Rakab Ganj is located here.

When Bhai Jaita Ji reached Anandpur Sahib with Guru Ji's holy head, he recited what had happened.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji (At that time Guru Ji's name was Gobind Rai and He became Guru Gobind Singh after receiving Amrit from the Panj Piaray on the Vaisakhi day in 1699) vowed to create a such a Sikh, who would be identified amongst thousands, and Guru Ji inaugurated the Khalsa Panth (on the Vaisakhi Day in 1699. It needs to be remembered that the Sikh identity was already well established by the times of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, albeit, less clearly defined in terms of Sikh *rehat* than after the *Amrit sanchaar* of Vaisakhi 1699. There are references to unshorn hair and dastar (turban) in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and from the times of Sri Guru Har Gobind Ji Sikhs kept arms. The saint/soldier image of the Sikhs had already emerged. References to Sikh *rehat* are to be found in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the *Vaars* of Bhai Gurdas).

The Khalsa Raj was established by the Khalsa with the blessings of the innocent powerless people for the protection of these people.

When the white people came to India they were able to establish their rule in other Indian states with comparative ease but were not so successful in the Punjab. They could not challenge the Sikhs, and they were surprised to note that the Sikhs were not frightened to fight a just war or to

die for a righteous cause. They were wondering how the Sikhs managed to get such power. They carried out research and discovered that the Sikh power lay in *Amrit*. Now they started thinking of how to interfere with the *Amrit* tradition. They colluded with some leading but unfaithful people in the *Panth* and started to introduce misinformation in the *Amrit Sanchar* and *Rehat Maryada* (see Glossary). At Akal Takhat, on one occasion they would do *Amrit Sanchar* with *keski* (small *dastar* or Sikh turban) and on another day they would do the ceremonies without the *keski*. In this way the *Rehat Maryada* (code and *Gursikhi*, the Sikh way of life) became lax and the Khalsa stopped getting the full benefit (power) of *Amrit*.

Firstly, there was laxity in the practice of the full *Rehat Maryada*, and secondly the Sikhs gave up early morning *simran*. In this way weaknesses crept into the Khalsa tradition. The Sikh was no longer a staunch follower of the Guru's Word and the Khalsa Raj was lost.

"As long as the Khalsa remains distinct, So long I will give him all My Glory."
(Sarab Loh Granth)

Sant Jarnail Singh Ji predicted, "When Sri Harmandar Sahib is attacked, the foundation of Khalistan will be laid that day." To make the foundation strong, it is important to do *Naam simran*. Strength will return with the recitation of *Naam* and you shall become fearless. When the foundation is rock solid, no force can shake it."

Ancient *Gursikhs* did *Naam simran* and spoke the truth. They had the strength of *Naam* and skilled training in weapons. Khalsa should have the full power of this combination of saint-soldier qualities. This will be generated through *Naam simran*. If other Gurdwaras would follow the good example of *Naam simran* at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall, then Khalsa Raj will come that much sooner. It is a question of making a start; once started Guru Ji will help.

"Walk even one step towards the Guru; And the True Guru will walk millions of steps to welcome you.

Repeat, even once, the mantra given by the True Guru; And the Guru will bless you.

By his Love you will repeat it again and again.

With devotion and reverence, donate even one coin to the Guru; and the Guru will bless you with all treasures.

The True Guru is the Treasure of Mercy. His Glory is Infinite and Boundless.

I bow, I bow, I bow, I bow, - Always and forever, Again and again." (Bhai Gurdaas Kabit 111)

You need to take the initiative. Guru Ji will certainly bestow sovereignty on the Khalsa.

Sandalwood Tree

I find great pleasure in doing *sewa*. One day when doing the *sewa* of making *prasaaday* (Gurdwara *rotis*) on the *tavi* (hot metal plate on the large oven for making *rotis* or *chapatis*), I suggested to the ladies, that we should recite "Waheguru". Bibis Kirpal Kaur, Basant Kaur, Gurdev Kaur, Jaswant Kaur, Satwinder Kaur, Satwant Kaur, Sarjit Kaur, Mohinder Kaur, Jaswinder Kaur and Kulwant Kaur were doing *sewa*. They are very keen to do *simran*. I started reciting "Waheguru" and they followed. In this way, the good practice of doing *simran* started while doing *sewa*.

Akhand Paatths are started every week on Friday. Sometimes two or three *Akhand Paatths* are started together. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the families who have organised *Akhand Paatths*, and their relatives come and do *sewa* in the *Langar*. The ladies do *sewa* of the *prasaadas* on the *tavi* and also do *simran* at the same time. Every week different families come and do *sewa*. Many ladies who have never done any *simran* are pleasantly surprised that they too have been given the opportunity to do *simran* for a couple of hours or so. Some say to each other that they had never done *simran* before.

In this way with the different families doing *sewa* and *simran*, this tradition has spread to the Gurdwaras in and around Southall. No one knew that the *sewa* of *Naam simran* was going on. With Satguru's grace, to this day *simran* goes on while *Langar* is being prepared.

"Such is the *Naam*, the Name of the Lord, the invaluable jewel, the most sublime wealth, which I have found through good deeds. By various efforts, I have enshrined it within my heart; this jewel cannot be hidden by hiding it. || 1 || The Glorious Praises of the Lord cannot be spoken by speaking. They are like the sweet candies given to a mute. || 1 || Pause || The tongue speaks, the ears listen, and the mind contemplates the Lord; they find peace and comfort. Says Bheekhan, my eyes are content; wherever I look, there I see the Lord. || 2 H" (SGGS p. 659)

The miracle of *Naam* is such that wherever *simran* goes on even quietly, it spreads and becomes known. We planted this sandalwood tree (of *Naam*) at Southall Gurdwara more than 26 years ago. It spread so much that its branches spread to the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in the Gurdwara. This *sewa* used to go on very quietly behind the scenes. No one's effort is ever wasted. Guru Ji Himself has granted this *sewa* of early morning *simran*. Now the *Sangat* sits in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and recite *simran* at *Amrit vela* (see Glossary).

"At *Amrit vela*, the ambrosial hours before dawn, chant the True Name, and contemplate His Glorious Greatness." (SGGS p. 2)

The early morning *simran* used to be done first at Clifton Road Gurdwara. However, the Gurdwara committee preferred to start with the *Kirtan* of *Asa Ji di Vaar* at that time. This was Guru Ji's *kautak*. We started looking for a place where we could sit and sow the seed of *simran*, the food for the soul."

One day, I went to Singh Sabha Gurdwara (at the time located at Havelock Road) at 4.00 in the morning. Giani Gurtej Singh was reciting the *Paatth* of *Nit Nem*. After the completion of the *Paatth*, I asked, "Giani Ji, can we do *simran* here?" He replied, "Certainly, as you please." He thought that he would be doing *Paatth* and following that, we would do *simran*. He saw no harm in that. I confirmed the same with the Head Granthi, Shamsheer Singh, who had no objection but

suggested that I confirm with the Gurdwara committee. It was Sunday that day. I went to the office and there were sitting: Bhai Harpal Singh Brar, Bhai Sarjit Singh Johal, Bhai Sohan Singh Samra, Bhai Balkar Singh Dhillon and Dr P. B. Johal. I said GurFateh to all.

I said, "You are sitting as a *Sangat*, I would like to submit a request." They encouraged me to speak. I said, "Can we do *simran* from 4.00 to 5.00 in the morning? The Gurdwara hall is free at that time." The General Secretary Harpal Singh looked at me and said, "4.00 in the morning? The month of November, the cold weather, who would come at 4.00 am? Are you joking? That is the time when people are sleeping soundly." I told them, "We used to do *simran* at Clifton Road Gurdwara from 4.00 to 5.00 am; now they say we cannot do it at that time."

"If someone savours a fragrance, then he can truly appreciate its flower. || 9 ||" (SGGS p. 725)

"One who can appreciate perfume, only he can discern the smell of a flower.

"Like the fragrance which remains in the flower, and like the reflection in the mirror, the Lord dwells deep within; search for Him within your own heart, O brother." (SGGS p. 684)

"Some fifteen or twenty of us are looking for a suitable place for *simran*, the ambrosial food for the soul." He thought for a while and said, "We shall discuss with the Committee and let you know." A week passed in this way. Those who were keen to do *simran* kept asking me if an arrangement had been agreed.

One day, the Gurdwara Stage Secretary, Amar Singh Thindh met me and said, "*Santo* (saintly one), the Committee has agreed to your request. You can go to Park Avenue Gurdwara and do *simran* there. We shall give you the keys." When I heard this, I went to the office again and spoke to Harpal Singh; I told him that those who would like to do *simran* lived nearer Havelock Road Gurdwara. It was easier for them to come to Havelock Road. He said, "We are about to start work on the new building here. So the Gurdwara will be moved to Park Avenue; so eventually you will have to go there anyway." He asked me to also confirm with Himat Singh Sohi, the President. I returned from the office and prayed for Guru Ji's help in this good cause.

"The remembrance of God is the highest and most exalted of all. In the remembrance of God, many are saved." (SGGS p. 263)

I met President Himat Singh Sohi, who agreed and asked us to start the following day.

"When the True Guru is merciful, then your desires will be fulfilled. When the True Guru is merciful, you will never grieve. When the True Guru is merciful, you will know no pain. When the True Guru is merciful, you will enjoy the Lord's Love. When the True Guru is merciful, then why should you fear death? When the True Guru is merciful, the body is always at peace. When the True Guru is merciful, the nine treasures are obtained. When the True Guru is merciful, you shall be absorbed in the True Lord." (SGGS p. 149)

Simran of Amrit Vela

(Meditative recitation of *Naam* in the early morning)

"The sparrow-hawk chirps in the ambrosial hours of the morning before the dawn; its prayers are heard in the Court of the Lord. The order is issued to the clouds, to let the rains of mercy shower down. I am a sacrifice to those who enshrine the True Lord within their hearts. O Nanak, through the Name, all are rejuvenated, contemplating the Word of the Guru's Shabad." (SGGS p. 1285)

With Guru Ji's Grace, *simran* was started at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Southall on 13 November 1995, from 4.00 to 5.00 in the morning. *Naam simran* in *Saadh Sangat* (Saintly Congregation) and in the holy presence of the Guru, bears fruit very quickly. Bhagat Kabir Ji says in his Bani: -

"Says Kabir, listen, O Saints: in the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, you shall be saved." (SGGS p. 1106)

"How is the Society of the Saints to be known? There, the Name of the One Lord is chanted." (SGGS p. 72)

"Without the True Guru, there is no *Sangat* (Holy Congregation). Without the *Shabad* no one can cross over to the other side." (SGGS p. 1068) (*Shabad* is the *Word* and in this context it is experience of God's Name i.e. *Naam* or God's Being (God's Omnipresence)).

"If you long for eternal peace, O Siblings of Destiny, then join the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy; this is the Guru's advice. There, the Naam, the Name of the Lord, is meditated on. In the Saadh Sangat, you shall be emancipated." (SGGS p. 1182)

"The Priceless Naam is in the Society of the Saints; by great good fortune, it is obtained. Do not be deluded by doubt; serve the True Guru, and keep your mind steady in one place." (SGGS p. 909)

In order to increase the attendance, I went from house to house to announce that *simran* is held in the morning, and requested that all should attend. Whoever I approached said, "It is very difficult to get up that early in the morning. I gave encouragement, "Do try when you are not working (e.g. holidays and weekends). Before you go to sleep recite the *Paatth* of *Kirtan Sohila* and say *Ardaas* to Guru Ji to give you the strength to get up early in the morning. Then Satguru Ji will Himself bless you. That is for Guru Ji; it is for you to say the *Ardaas*." When we started *simran*, the *sewa* was done by Bhai Gursharan Singh, Bhai Jagtar Singh, Bibi Navleen Kaur and Bibi Ranjit Kaur. Bibi Ranjit Kaur did the *sewa* of the *dholki* (small drum) as well. However, there was no one who could play the *tabla* (two small drums played in an upright position). I thought of getting someone who could play the tabla and asked Jaspal Singh. He was worried that he could not get up that early. I said to him, "See if you can come when you are on holiday."

With Waheguru's blessing he started doing the *sewa* of the tabla daily. When he had been doing the *sewa* for six or seven weeks, with Guru Ji's grace he had an unusual experience. It was the Martyrdom Gurpurab of the younger *Sahibzadas* (Guru Gobind Singh Ji's two younger Princes). Bhai Gursharan Singh was doing *sewa* on the harmonium. After the completion of the *simran* programme, he said to Jaspal Singh, "You were great today, you played such beautiful tabla; it

seemed as if the tabla was playing itself." Many people from the *Sangat* came and told me that they felt great contentment that morning. Has a *kautak* (see Glossary) taken place?" I said, "The Guru's *kautaks*, only the Guru knows." Following this the *Sangat* became even more keen. Jaspal Singh was motivated even more than before.

Sangat started coming in larger numbers. Whosoever came once became a regular. There is one special quality in this *Sangat*, that each participant first cleans *Sangat's* shoes (footwear of any type) and then join in *simran*. This is all praise of Guru Nanak. To destroy the false self-centred pride of His children, He Himself is making them do this *sewa*. Guru Ji says in Sukhmani Sahib:-

"One whose heart is mercifully blessed with abiding humility, O Nanak, is liberated here, and obtains peace hereafter." (SGGS p. 278)

Secondly, no one talks to each other unnecessarily. They only greet each other with GurFateh. Those who earn Naam, keep it to themselves and go away. Gossip about each other or saying anything bad about others makes the *simran* useless.

"You brawling, ignorant person of low intellect, reverse your breath and turn it inward. Let your mind be intoxicated with the stream of Ambrosial Nectar which trickles down from the furnace of the tenth gate." (SGGS p. 1123)

In accordance with this *Shabad*, when one is in this state of mind, then *simran* is completely harmonised with the breathing and life pulsation of an individual. It becomes natural and automatic. Speech stops and the feeling is as if breathing is rising inwards and upwards. These are the life carrying *swas*, which when they reach the top of the nose between the two eyebrows (position of the *thrikuti* - *Trikuti* is the flesh on the forehead between the eyes. Literally "trikuti" mean "three wrinkles or folds"), an individual's thoughts stop. The mind is then completely at peace. The feeling is as if something on the *thrikuti* is creeping upwards and it causes an itch. One keeps stroking that spot. The *swas* keep moving above this point. In my childhood, I had seen Yogis taking their *swas* upwards. Their *swas* were empty and there was no *simran* of Waheguru. By doing this, the age is prolonged but there is no means of reaching *Sach Khand*, the final destination of the soul. By doing *swas-swas simran*, with Waheguru's blessing, the *dasam duar* (tenth gate) opens and one has *darshan* (holy sight) of Waheguru.

When the end comes, the habit of *swas-swas Naam simran* takes one straight to *Sach Khand*. Salvation is achieved in this life. To reach this stage, a Gursikh has to devote 13 to 14 hours a day to *Naam simran*. With this amount of practise, one is able to see fantastic sights of nature. However, to attain this level one must not covet two things:

"Firstly another's wealth and secondly a woman other than own wife."

If one keeps away from these two, then Waheguru will come closer to you. To find a home for *Naam* in the mind, one needs both, *Naam* and humility. Guru Nanak Dev Ji brought *Naam* and humility from *Sach Khand*. Some Gursikhs reach this stage but then get caught in praise, self-centred pride and arrogance etc. Few go beyond this level of spiritual attainment.

The date-palm is very tall. Its fruit are very sweet. To get them one has to make a determined effort to reach them. Only one who knows how to climb the palm can reach the fruit. Many fall

from half way up. Some fall just before reaching the fruit because they become too self-assured. To save oneself from false pride, Satguru Ji says: -
"One whose heart is mercifully blessed with abiding humility, O Nanak, is liberated here, and obtains peace hereafter." (SGGS p. 278)

When one reaches this stage then, to save oneself from self centred arrogance one should clean the Sangat's shoes. One becomes humble by doing this.

"I am not good; no one is bad. Prays Nanak, He alone saves us." (SGGS p. 728)

Consider yourself more lowly than anyone else. Then pray to Satguru: -

"One who is not affected by pleasure or pain, who looks upon friend and enemy alike, says Nanak, listen, mind: know that such a person is liberated." (SGGS p. 1427)

King! My bad qualities are many. Help even my enemy. If anyone would like *Naam* to reside in the mind, then it is important to earn humility. Whatever a human being does, it is for his own comfort and happiness. He buys or builds a good house to live in. He wants a top quality car. People do so much for own physical happiness. But few make any effort for the salvation of the soul.

I pray that a Sikh wherever settled should recite *simran* in the morning. If possible, he should join the *Sangat* in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji for reciting *Naam*, for this is most beneficial. As a result of *simran*, Guru Ji will grant Khalsa Raj that much sooner.

"Even though the oceans and the salty seas are very vast, the Gursikh will cross over it to get to his Guru. || 14 || Just as the mortal dies without water, so does the Sikh die without the Guru. || 15 || Just as the earth looks beautiful when the rain falls, so does the Sikh blossom forth meeting the Guru. || 16 || I long to be the servant of Your servants; I call upon You reverently in prayer. || 17 || Nanak offers this prayer to the Lord, that he may meet the Guru, and find peace. || 18 ||"
(SGGS p. 757)

In England it is very cold in winter. There is snow and frost. In such weather one does not feel like going out. It is very difficult to get up early in the morning. Everyone feels like keeping warm in the quilt for as long as possible.

"Those who are blessed with the favour of my Lord and Master are not asked to render their account. Says Nanak, I am a sacrifice to those who listen to God with their ears."
(SGGS p. 577)

Those Gursikhs who have been blessed, for them getting up early has been made easier. For they are keen to take a bath and go and experience *darshan* (holy sight) of Guru Ji. No matter how cold or even if it is snowing, Gursikhs still attend Gurdwara. I never thought that I would ever enjoy *darshan* of the Guru and the Sangat early in the morning. With Guru Ji's blessing, that has come to pass. The Sangat is so eager now that if anyone is unable to attend for some reason then that person feels a great loss.

"We are born, and we grow, and having grown, we pass away. Before our very eyes, this world is passing away. || 1 || How can you not die of shame, claiming, "This world is mine"? At the very

last moment, nothing is yours. || 1 || Pause || Trying various methods, you cherish your body, but at the time of death, it is burned in the fire. || 2 || You apply sandalwood oil to your limbs, but that body is burned with the firewood. || 3 || Says Kabir, listen, O virtuous people: your beauty shall vanish, as the whole world watches. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 325)

One day, Bibi Jaswinder Kaur (Rano) said, "Bhai Sahib Ji! I felt as if I suffered a loss yesterday." I asked her, "What happened, in what business have you suffered a loss?" She replied, "No Bhai Sahib Ji, I kept on sleeping; I was in such deep sleep that I did not hear the alarm. I regret that I did not attend the morning *simran*." I told her, "Truly you have incurred a loss. If one hundred Sikhs are doing *simran*, then the personal loss to you is one hundred hours. When all Gursikhs are doing *simran*, then the *simran* of "Waheguru" *Gurmantar* (Guru's mystical formula) is heard by one another. The benefit of this to the soul is many times more."

"Says Nanak, listen to the Ambrosial Naam and become holy; you were created only to hear the Truth." (SGGS p. 922)

Salvation is achieved by reciting *Naam* with *Saadh Sangat* by sitting in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. If an individual wishes to meditate harmoniously on the holy feet of Guru Ji (i.e. symbolic of meditation on Guru's *Shabad* in humility) then one must give up untruth and jealousy. One has to be in total humility before Satguru Ji. One must not wish evil of anyone and must not say bad things about another. Do not covet another's wealth or woman; think of another woman (other than your wife) as mother or sister. Chastity is essential. One who observes these rules, pleases Guru Ji and is blessed by Guru Ji.

About 25 years ago, when Bhai Pritam Singh, Bibi Gian Kaur and their family took Amrit, I was amongst the Panj Piaray. After this I became attached with this family. I felt as if we had come together in this life due to a connection in a previous life. A person who takes *Amrit* becomes a member of the Guru's family. Bibi Gian Kaur was very keen that Gursikhs should come and do *simran* and *kirtan* at home. With the effort of Bhai Ajit Singh Bhogal of Delhi, *simran* and *kirtan* routine carried on for a long time. Bhai Sahib Ji stayed with this family for three or four years. Seeing his way of life, Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji's life changed as well. He too started doing *simran* and *Nit Nem*. He started living the life of Gursikhs.

I have been in touch with this family for many years, but I have never heard them condemn anyone or gossip about anyone. If such people do *simran* in the morning then the mind automatically concentrates on Guru Ji's *Char an* (holy feet). Bhai Sahib Ji told me, "One morning while doing *simran* I underwent an unusual experience:

"I have seized the Unseen and Unfathomable Lord, through the Word of the Guru's Shabad. I am a sacrifice to the True Guru."
(SGGS p. 1114)

"A wave of complete tranquillity and peace went through my body. The wandering mind became peaceful. The body became numb. Suddenly "Waheguru Waheguru" rhythm started deep in me. I could hear the sound of small bells. Sometimes there was also another sound. I experienced this for about three or four seconds. I was grateful to Waheguru for this spiritual experience."

Any ordinary person can undergo such unusual experiences when concentrating fully on Naam.

"Having been associated in previous lives" (SGGS p. 700)

His wife Bibi Amarjit Kaur also lives a *Gursikh* life. She also joins in the morning *simran*. She never raises her voice, always cheerful, and has a charitable nature. If a *sant* comes for donations for some Gurdwara, she never sends him back empty handed. If one has such a life partner, and the couple join together in *simran* then they achieve salvation.

A person who becomes humble, achieves salvation in this life and happiness in the next. In the same way many other Singhs enjoy Guru Ji's blessing. More Sangat attends *Naam simran*. Many other ladies have started doing Kirtan. Bibi Gurdip Kaur does *sewa* on harmonium and tabla and her son also does such *sewa*. Bibi Bhupinder Kaur does *kirtan sewa*. She travels about nine miles to join in the *simran*.

One day Bhai Jaspal Singh took me to his house. I noticed that his wife, Bibi Jagdeep Kaur looked a bit unhappy. I thought that maybe, because Jaspal Singh goes and plays Tabla (at *Naam simran*) she is not happy. She said *GurFateh* to me and went to make tea. When she returned I asked her, "Jaspal Singh goes to play tabla, are you happy with that?" She replied, "Yes, I am very happy because he goes for a good purpose. If he were going to some other place I could not have stopped him either."

I explained to her that one tenth of the *sewa* which Jaspal Singh was doing went to her credit. She asked me, how could that be as she slept while he was away. I explained, "The government deducts a part of one's salary for pension purposes; so the highest government of all, that of Akal Purakh, will give you both the reward hereafter."

I was told by Sucha Singh Bains, "I have attended Gurdwara Sahib, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Havelock Road, morning and evening for thirty years. I benefit from the *katha* and *kirtan*. Then about just over a year ago I heard that *simran* was done from 4.00 to 5.00 in the morning. Hearing this I was interested to see what *simran* was. Some time passed and on 1st August, 1996, a close friend persuaded me to attend the Gurdwara at 4.15 in the morning. I cannot describe seeing the *Amrit of simran* (ambrosial spiritual water of Naam) showering on the Sangat. It is 1st August, 1997, today, and it is Guru Ji's blessing that in the 365 days I have not been late nor have I missed any day. On the very first day I had such an experience that according to Bhagat Kabir Ji's *Shabad*:-

"Kabir, the True Guru, the Spiritual Warrior, has shot me with His Arrow. As soon as it struck me, I fell to the ground, with a hole in my heart." (SGGS p. 1374)

"Only my Satguru knows the experience I went through. I do the *Nit Nem* of the Five Banis including Sukhmani Sahib. I hear *katha* and *kirtan* daily. Now if I am unable to attend the *katha kirtan* for some reason, I find it difficult to miss *simran*. The praise of *Nit Nem*, *katha* and *kirtan* is great and can be described in degrees; but the greatness of *simran* is indescribable.

One day, I met Bhai Bikram Singh after the Gurdwara *simran* and we had a conversation. He said, "I do not have the words with which to praise *simran*. One day Balkar Singh came to see us at home and informed us that *simran* was held at the Gurdwara daily and that we should attend as well. The following day I went to the Gurdwara and heard the melody of "Waheguru". I cannot describe how sweet it was. I saw that a large Sangat including small children were doing *simran*. When I saw little children doing *simran*, then I thought why have I missed it? Why have I not attended? There was a little child sitting on the stage and doing *simran* aloud. I came home and

told my wife Mahinder Kaur that at the Gurdwara, "Ram Naam" was being freely distributed. Why had we been left sleeping? As Kabir Ji says: -

"Kabir, if you must rob and plunder, then plunder the plunder of the Lord's Name. Otherwise, in the world hereafter, you will regret and repent, when the breath of life leaves the body."
(SGGS p. 1366)

"There the True Name was being freely distributed. With this, one achieves happiness here and now and also respect in the world hereafter." My wife said, "I shall go also."

I asked him, "How did you become interested in *simran*?" Bhai Sahib told me, "My father passed away when I was six years old. I was brought up by my Baba Ji (grandfather). My Baba Ji was devoted to Gurbani and knew much Bani by heart. He would give me good advice that I should do good things and keep away from bad deeds and bad company. Due to his company, the seed of Waheguru's Name was sown in my mind. The *Naam* which Baba Ji helped me to recite grew with me to fruition. He gave me encouragement to recite and learn by heart much Gurbani; and, he would say that Bani would save me from the beating of the *Yams* (Death's black angels).

When Baba Ji's end came, he got everyone together and said, "I am about to go to sleep; let no one wake me up." When many hours passed and he did not get up, then the family became worried. When we looked, his soul had already departed."

I told him, "Those who recite *Naam*, they know beforehand when they would be leaving this world, and their last *swas* (life breath) leaves the body with ease."

Few Understand the Greatness of Naam

"The Naam is the Support of all creatures. The Naam is the Support of the earth and solar systems. The Naam is the Support of the Simritees, the Vedas and the Puraanas. The Naam is the Support by which we hear of spiritual wisdom and meditation. The Naam is the Support of the Akaashic ethers and the nether regions. The Naam is the Support of all bodies. The Naam is the Support of all worlds and realms. Associating with the Naam, listening to it with the ears, one is saved. Those whom the Lord mercifully attaches to His Naam — O Nanak, in the fourth state, those humble servants attain salvation. || 5 ||" (SGGS p. 284)

"A hundred times a day, I am a sacrifice to my Guru; He made angels out of men, without delay." (SGGS p. 462)

The Gurbani composition of *Asa di Vaar* makes it clear that a human being can become a saint by reciting Naam (Meditation on Waheguru's Name i.e. God Being, the attributes of which are described in the Mool Mantar, the Basic Precept, at the beginning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji).

"O Nanak, he merges with the Lord of the Universe, like water with water." (SGGS p. 633)

"The rays of light merge with the sun, and water merges with water. One's light blends with the Light, and one becomes totally perfect." (SGGS p. 846)

In the same way, Guru Ji says that one meets Waheguru by reciting *Naam*.

O' human being! If your salvation lies in *Naam simran*, then why do you delay? There is nothing but pain in the cycles of birth and death. You have received a human body; use it to recite *Naam* and make your human life a success; you will not receive this human body again and again. Bhagat Kabir, Bhagat Namdev, Bhagat Ravidas and many other *bhagats* (saintly people) became immortal by reciting *Naam*. Their *Bani* has been included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. They will be remembered forever. At first, they too were ordinary human beings but they became immortal by meditating on Waheguru. Any human being can succeed by taking the initiative and making a continuous effort.

"Mankind is afflicted with the disease of egotism. The disease of sexual desire overwhelms the elephant." (SGGS p. 1140)

"Egotism is opposed to the Name of the Lord; the two do not dwell in the same place." (SGGS p. 560)

There is no unity in the *Panth*. All are caught up in *haomai* (ego, self-centred pride). They have formed separate groups. Separate Gurdwaras have been made by different castes. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji eliminated the caste system. If Guru Ji had accepted the caste prejudice, He would not have included the *Bani* of the *Bhagats* of different castes and religions in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Guru Ji's *Bani* says: -

"First, Allah created the Light; then, by His Creative Power, His creative power (*kudrat*) made all mortal beings. From the One Light, the entire universe was created. So who is good, and who is bad?" (SGGS p. 1349)

Now the Panth will have to think how to erase this *haomai*. Until *haomai* is destroyed there can be no mutual love. *Haomai* will only be destroyed by reciting *Naam*. The earth, the skies and the moon are stable through *Naam*. If we observe closely, we see that the Sikhs are not keen to recite *Naam*. There are only a few who get up and recite *Naam*. The need was to get up early in the morning and merge with *Naam*, but they were unable to get out of the *Kalyug's* warm blanket in the morning.

At some Gurdwaras nowadays, *simran* is done in the presence of Satguru Ji. However, few make the effort. There is no effort to get closer to the Guru's *Charan* (see Glossary). There is no desire to recite *Naam*. They are content with just doing *Nit Nem* and in this way they are spending their lives. When someone's birthday comes then there is rejoicing that the person is so many years old. However, people do not think that their life span is being reduced year after year. So many *swas* (see Glossary) of life have been wasted and no *simran* has been done.

One should realise after doing the *Paatth* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It is repeated again and again in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, "O' human being, recite *Naam*, recite *Naam*". One should make the effort to recite *Naam*. It is only through *Naam simran* that Khalsa Raaj will be achieved.

(A)

"Invoke the blessed Sri Har Krishan whose vision heals all pains.

Call upon Tegh Bahadur so that the Kingdom of Heaven (Nine Treasures of life) may come to earth." (*Ardaas*)

The morning *simran* had been going on for one year and the *Sangat* arranged to have an *Akhand Paatth* (continuous *Paatth* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). Bhai Harbans Singh Ji Kohli recited the *Paatth* of the Five Banis before the *Sangat* every morning. After the *Hukamnama*, he announced that the *Akhand Patth* would be started on 23 December 1996 and the completion *Bhog* would be on 25 December 1996. Outside the Gurdwara hall, Bhai Davinder Singh asked Bhai Harbans Singh, "Who will be responsible for the *sewa* of this *Akhand Paatth*" He said, "Bhai Rama Singh Ji is responsible. If you need more information then speak to him."

The following day Bhai Davinder Singh put in a request to me, "Bhai Sahib Ji, I would like to do the *sewa* (cost and arrangement) of the *Akhand Paatth* being arranged by the morning *Sangat*. I explained to him that all the *sewa* was being done by the whole *Sangat*; he could put in his share. He said, "Bhai Sahib Ji, by starting the early morning *Kirtan* you have done a great service for others. When we do *simran* for an hour in the presence of Guru Ji, it seems as if one hour has been spent in *Sach Khand* (in the company of Waheguru Ji). There are two *Sach Khands* - the one above us (in heaven) and the other of the morning *simran*. I think that no one has seen the one above; why not spend the time here usefully. We were not aware before, that *Naam simran* was being held in the Gurdwara. We arranged for an *Akhand Paatth* on the *Prakaash Utsav* (Birthday) of Sri Har Krishan Ji. During that time we attended Gurdwara Sahib for three days and had the good fortune to hear the morning *simran*. I enjoyed such bliss on listening, that I cannot describe it. From that day we attend daily."

Bhai Davinder Singh has been doing the *sewa* of Akhand Patth on Sri Guru Har Krishan Ji's *Prakaash Utsav* for many years. I explained, "Guru Ji has given you everything. Now in His kindness he is bestowing on you the gift of *Naam*, which cannot be valued.

"The Master's Name is Priceless; no one knows its value. Those who have good destiny recorded upon their foreheads, O Nanak, enjoy the Love of the Lord." (SGGS p. 81)

"The Great Giver keeps His Gifts in His Hand; He gives them to those with whom He is pleased." (SGGS p. 604)

"Your *sewa* has been accepted and now Sri Guru Har Krishan Ji has given you the gift of *Naam*" I noticed that his *Singhani* (wife) Bibi Jaswinder Kaur is also keen on doing *sewa*. She does *sewa* of the *Saadh Sangat* with great devotion. Their children Jaspreet Singh and Indarpreet Singh love to do *sewa* of washing metal dishes in the Langar and the youngest son is keen to do *Chaur* (see Glossary) over Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

(B)

Bhai Joga Singh Ji came to England from the Waheguru Simran Society, Australia, for making a collection. I also used to go around with him. One day while making the collection we went to the house of Bhai Sarabjit Singh. As we were talking, I asked, "Do you know that early in the morning, *simran* is held at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara?" They did not know. I said, "You too should attend. This is in praise of Guru Nanak and the reward of doing *simran* in *Saadh Sangat* is very high." Bhai Sarabjit Singh's *Singhani* (wife) Bibi Sharanjeet Kaur said, "I have great faith in Waheguru. When we came to England, we went through great hardship at first and we sought the protection of *Gurbani*. We started the *Paatths* of Sukhmani Sahib and would go and do *sewa* in the Gurdwara. One day I was very unhappy and I prayed to Guru Ji. Charitable Guru Ji showed a *Kautak*, He had a *baata* (iron bowl used for Amrit Sanchaar) in His hand and said, "Drink this and all your pain and suffering will be destroyed." All was well after that. Our business progressed and we were blessed with a son."

I asked, "How did you become interested in *Gursikhi*?" Sharanjeet Kaur said, "My mother told me to recite *paatth* to her and promised to give me money. Knowing that I would get money, I started reciting *paatth*. By reciting *paatth* daily, I was able to learn Jap Ji by heart. My mother would give me good religious advice. She would say, "If you recite *Gurbani*, Guru Ji will always protect you." Listening to my mother I became keen to commit *Bani* to memory. As I read *Bani*, I also started understanding and enjoying it. With Guru Ji's grace, I memorised the Five Banis of Nitnem and Sukhmani Sahib. When I was mature, I was married but my husband's family was not fully committed to *Sikhi*.

"When I arrived in this family, then I would recite *Bani* as I worked around the house. With *Bani* recitation the atmosphere of the house changed. All family started living more happily. Other members of the family started reading *Bani*. I am grateful to my mother who linked me to *Bani* and encouraged me to read *Bani*."

I said, "Guru Ji has showered his blessing on you. You should now attend the morning *simran*. We learn from this that if parents get their children interested in *Gurbani*, then they achieve success in life and Waheguru is ever present with them. He supports them at times of difficulty.

"When I opened (the treasure house) and gazed upon the treasures of my father and grandfather, then my mind became very happy. || 1 || The storehouse is inexhaustible and immeasurable, overflowing with priceless jewels and rubies. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 186)

(C)

Bhai Balkar Singh said, "I used to go to work after *matha tekan* at the Gurdwara everyday, I used to think that to attend Gurdwara in the morning and evening was sufficient. One day I heard *katha* at the Gurdwara that to recite *Gurbani* and to do *simran* was essential. The Giani Ji doing the *katha* quoted the following *Gurbani* lines:

"The nights are wasted sleeping, and the days are wasted eating. Human life is such a precious jewel, but it is being lost in exchange for a mere shell. || 1 || You do not know the Name of the Lord. You fool, you shall regret and repent in the end." (SGGS p. 156)

"Giani Ji explained to the Sangat, "O' human being, do Waheguru *simran* and make your life a success. Countless sinners have been saved through *Naam* recitation."

"Walk even one step towards the Guru; And the True Guru will walk millions of steps to welcome you.

Repeat, even once, the *mantra* (mystical formula) given by the True Guru; And the Guru will bless you: By his Love you will repeat it again and again." (Bhai Gurdaas *Kabit* 111)

Bhai Balkar Singh said that many Gursikhs like him do *matha tekan* at the Gurdwara before going to work. All believe that *matha tekan* is sufficient (for getting attendance noted with the Guru). I too kept doing the same for many years. I too thought that I had done *matha tekan* and that is sufficient. I was not too keen on *simran* nor did I make any effort to get up in the morning. My sons Savraj Singh and Savdeep Singh attended the morning *simran* daily. I would think, they don't sleep themselves and also keep others awake.

"Then there was the first *Raaen Subaaee* of children. That was a holiday and I too went to the Gurdwara to listen to the children. The start of the *Raaen Subaaee* won my affection, that such little children have come to please Waheguru Ji. I was surprised that the children did *kirtan* so charmingly. I was won over by the *kirtan* of Ajitkamal Singh and Sukhdeep Singh, and Gursharan Singh, Manbir Singh, Gurinder Singh and Amrit Kaur.

"When it was time for the early morning *simran*, there were lines of Sangat for *matha tekan*. The impression given was as if there was a Gurpleb. One side was long lines of men and on the other side of ladies. Bhai Gursharan Singh and Bhai Jagtar Singh started with a Shabad before Naam *simran*.

"Now, the Dark Age of *Kalyug* has come. Plant the *Naam*, the Name of the One Lord. It is not the season to plant other seeds. Do not wander lost in doubt and delusion. One who has such destiny written on his forehead, shall meet With the Guru and find the Lord. O mortal, this is the season of the *Naam*. Nanak utters the Glorious Praises of the Lord." (SGGS p. 1185)

"This Shabad struck me like an arrow. I was in a state of *bairag* (see Glossary). I could not control myself. Then I started thinking that I have wasted my life. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji says in Sukhmani:

"Without the remembrance of the Lord, day and night pass in vain, like the crop which withers without rain. Without meditation on the Lord of the Universe, all works are in vain, like the wealth of a miser, which lies useless." (SGGS p. 269)

"From that day as a matter of principle, I decided to attend *simran* every morning. Daily *simran* has produce a *kautak* by Guru Ji in that I have started getting up at 1.00 in the morning and I do

not go to sleep again. I was encouraged by Divine Power that I should do the *sewa* of bringing the holy "carriage" of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji from Guru Ji's holy resting place (*Sach Khand*) at the Gurdwara. (This is done very early in the morning.) I regarded myself as most fortunate that Guru Ji blessed me with this *sewa*."

The Guru Is Always With Me

"If You are the mountain, Lord, then I am the peacock. If You are the moon, then I am the partridge in love with it. || 1 || O Lord, if You will not break with me, then I will not break with You. For, if I were to break with You, with whom would I then join? || 1 || Pause || If You are the lamp, then I am the wick. If You are the sacred place of pilgrimage, then I am the pilgrim. || 2 || I am joined in true love with You, Lord. I am joined with You, and I have broken with all others. || 3 || Wherever I go, there I serve You. There is no other Lord Master than You, O Divine Lord. || 4 || Meditating on You, the noose of death is cut away. To attain devotional worship, Ravidas sings to You, Lord. || 5 ||" (SGGS p. 658)

From the day I had *darshan* (holy sight) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (in Bombay), I became attached to Guru Ji whole-heartedly. I could not rest without daily *darshan* of Guru Ji.

"I cannot survive without seeing my Beloved. My eyes are welling up with tears. || 3 || My Friend, the True Guru, has been my Best Friend since I was very young. I cannot survive without seeing Him, O my mother." (SGGS p. 94)

When I came to England, I first looked for a Gurdwara. To date, wherever I have stayed, I have prepared a room for Guru Ji. First we prepared a room at Chacha Darshan Singh's house. We brought Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji from the Gurdwara and did *Prakaash* at Chacha Ji's place. Bhai Amrik Singh was staying with us. He taught me how to do *sewa* of Guru Ji (that is, how to do *Prakaash* and *Sukh-aasan* - see Glossary). Daily we would join together in the morning and evening to do *paatth* and *simran*. In the same way Guru Ji's rooms were prepared wherever I stayed: in the houses of Bhai Maghar Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, Bhai Mall Singh and Bhai Mohinder Singh Bains. There is *Prakaash* of Guru Ji in Bhai Gursharan Singh's house where I am staying now. Wherever, I stayed, I kept close to Guru Ji (physically and spiritually). In this way, I have humbly carried on doing (unannounced) *sewa* of Guru Ji. I was blessed by Guru Ji that my innermost desire of finding a perfect Guru has been fulfilled, for, "Without the perfect Guru salvation is not achieved."

The Gift of Gursikhi

One day, Bibi Dayal Kaur said, "A lady from our village who was related to *Braham Giani* (see Glossary) Sant Baba Jwala Singh Ji Harkhowal, used to go for Baba Ji's *darshan*. Bibi Dayal Kaur said to this lady, "I also would like to go for Baba Ji's *darshan*. When you go, take me along with you."

The following week the opportunity came up for *darshan* of Baba Ji of Harkhowal. Bibi Dayal Kaur and her husband, Bhai Sahib Beant Singh went for Baba Ji's *darshan* with the lady from their village. Bhai Sahib was very wise. He said to his wife, Bibi Dayal Kaur, "We are not going to ask for anything other than *Noam*" (The couple were without a child at the time.) When they reached there, Baba Ji was in holy communication with the *Sangat*. These three bowed with respect and sat down. That lady explained to Baba Ji, "They have come for your *darshan*. Bless them and give them the gift of *simran*." Baba Ji said, "Only Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji can bestow this gift. You go and do *matha tekan* before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji." After they performed *matha tekan*, the Paatthi Singh read the *Hukamnama* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji:

"The Lord is the Fulfiller of desires, the Giver of total peace; the *Kaamdhen* (see first footnote at the chapter on *Kaamdhen Shakti*), the wish-fulfilling cow, is in His power. So meditate on such a Lord, O my soul. Then, you shall obtain total peace, O my mind. || 1 || Chant, O my mind, the True Name, Sat Naam, the True Name. In this world, and in the world beyond, your face shall be radiant, by meditating continually on the immaculate Lord God. || Pause || Wherever anyone remembers the Lord in meditation, disaster runs away from that place. By great good fortune, we meditate on the Lord. The Guru has blessed servant Nanak with this understanding, that by meditating on the Lord, we cross over the terrifying world-ocean. || 2 ||" (SSGS p. 669)

With Waheguru's blessing, in due course, Bibi Dayal Kaur had three children, two sons and a daughter. When the boys were five and six years old, Bibi Dayal Kaur took them to Harkhowal for Baba Ji's *darshan*. Bibi Ji's wish was that they should bow at Baba Ji's feet. At that time Baba Ji was sitting with his legs crossed (in *chaunkra* position). Bibi Ji thought that her wish would not be fulfilled. When the children came in front of Baba Ji, he put his feet forward and blessed them, that the children when grown up would encourage others to recite *Naam*. Bibi Ji was delighted that her wish had been fulfilled. Baba Ji was a true *Braham Giani*.

When the *simran* started at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, then Bibi Ji remembered Baba Ji's blessing. The words of Baba Ji came to be true. A person is predestined to do *Naam simran*. Due to Baba Ji's blessing, all members of Bibi Dayal Kaur's family recite *Naam*.

"Chant the Naam yourself, and inspire others to chant it. By loving devotional worship, you shall cross over the world-ocean." (SSGS p. 290)

They do *Naam simran* and encourage others to do the same. Some families take part in morning *simran* from 4.00 to 5.00, after doing Guru Ji's *Prakaash*, making an offering of *Prashaad* and then doing the *Paatth* of Sukhmani Sahib.

Attendance at SachKhand

(*Sach Khand*: Plain of Truth or Gods Court)

(*Sach Khand* is interpreted variously and depending upon the context, as the sphere where the Absolute Truth, the Ultimate Reality resides. Therefore it is the God's country, God's Court, heavenly destination for saintly souls which have been united with the Lord. *Sach Khand* in *Sikhi* is the proximity of the human soul to the Lord (i.e. when the soul begins to reside at the *Charan Kanwal* - Holy Feet - of the Lord through immersion in His Name.) Such proximity is achieved in this life. The Lord is the Ik Oangkar as described in the Mool Mantar and none other.)

Dreams are of two types, good and bad. If a person has bad thoughts then the dreams are bad. If thoughts are good then the dreams are nice too. A person who thinks harmful thoughts about others suffers from frightening dreams. For example feeling jealous of one's neighbour's good fortune and thinking bad about him. Some are so jealous that they go to those who practise black magic and cast spells (*jaadoo toona*). More than that; some even start feeling jealous of one's own brothers. Why is his family happy? Why are his children better educated than ours? Why are they so obedient? It is noticed sometimes that ladies show more jealousy and keep running to those who cast spells and practise black magic. They cannot be happy doing all this but they can only suffer. One should always wish others well. As some *Gursikhs* recite and learn *Bani* by heart, the *Bani* becomes part of their subconscious mind, and they keep reciting the same even when sleeping.

In the morning the *Amritdhari Singhs* (those who have taken Amrit) do the Guru's service i.e. *simran*. When *Gursikhs* do this for a number of years *Gurbani* is recorded in their mind. For example, a child goes to school for education. He attends daily. If he goes for one day and is absent for the next couple of days, he cannot progress. How would he pass? If he puts in effort into his studies only then would he succeed. If a child does not go to school, the teacher is concerned about his absence. When a child does not attend then he is marked as absent. But look at the generosity of the Guru; if for some reason a *Gursikh* is unable to attend in the morning, then the Guru does not look at his weaknesses. In family life there are many obligations such as the need to attend a marriage or some other programme. If one does not go to sleep early then it is difficult to get up early in the morning; but for the practising *Gursikh*, Guru Ji makes him recite *Naam* in his sleep and thus his attendance is noted As Bhagat Kabir Ji says: -

"Kabir, if someone utters the Name of the Lord even in dreams, I would make my skin into shoes for his feet." (SGGS p. 1367)

When I took *Amrit*, I experienced many such *kautaks* (unusual experiences). Many Singhs and Singhanis also tell me of similar experiences that *simran* starts in a dream suddenly. Some hear *kirtan* as well. Some *Gursikhs*, while still sleeping, start doing *simran* in a dream at the appropriate time early in the morning. The *swas-swas simran* taught by the *Panj Piaray* during *Amrit Sanchar* is of great benefit. When *swas-swas simran* resides in the *swas* (in each breath), then as a result of this *simran*, in their dream form, they can travel to many countries and return to their bodies. This is the first stage of the *Gursikhs*. Guru Arjan Dev Ji says in Sukhmani Sahib: -

"With each and every breath, meditate in remembrance on the Lord of the Universe, and the anxiety within your mind shall depart." (SGGS p. 295)

Dependence on Another

(Being subject to another's will)

When my health became poor and I had to be admitted to the hospital. As soon as I arrived they put me on a drip of glucose. Bhai Gursharan Singh was sitting with me. I said to him, "I am very thirsty, give me some water to drink." He said, "You will not get any water for six hours because the doctor has stopped your eating or drinking." Hearing this I thought I was then in the hands of others and could not do anything.

If, for some reason a person is sent to jail, then that person is in the hands of others. For the duration of the jail sentence a person cannot do as he pleases. If the sentence is for five or six months then the person's parents make all sorts of efforts and they consult lawyers, to free him. However, a human being does not think, that if sentenced to the cycle of the 8.4 million life forms, then how would the suffering soul be freed. Who would come to the rescue? (8.4 million life forms is a figure from the Hindu literature to denote that life goes through countless species in nature. It is figure of speech so far as Gurbani is concerned. Such popular idioms, well known to the people, are frequently used in Gurbani to make the understanding easier. As with numerous popular stories in Gurbani, what is important, is the inner Gurmatt meaning and the moral of each story.)

"Your youth has passed away like this, and old age has overtaken your body. Says Nanak, meditate, vibrate upon the Lord; your life is fleeting away! || 3 || You have become old, and you do not understand that death is overtaking you. Says Nanak, you are insane! Why do you not remember and meditate on God?" || 4 || (SGGS p. 1426)

There is no escape (freedom) without Waheguru's Name. Until such time as one has health, one can do *sewa* and *simran* and make this life a success.

Salvation of Families

Once children asked at a camp, "Bhai Sahib Ji, tell us how were 21 generations related to Pralaad, redeemed. Only Pralaad had recited Naam, not the other members of the family; how can this be possible?"

"The Dear Lord completes the tasks of the Saints. He saved twenty- one generations of Prahlaad's descendents "(SGGS p. 1133)

I explained to the children: -

When the time for Raja Janak to go to *Sach Khand* came, then the angels seated him in a heavenly carriage and started off. When they reached hell, there loud cries of pain and suffering could be heard. Hearing these, he asked what that place was. The angels replied, "This is hell. Those who do not meditate on God, they are punished here. With the arrival of Raja Janak, those suffering in hell felt peaceful; their suffering lessened, for Raja Janak had done much meditation. When Raja Janak started to go further, those suffering pleaded and asked him not to leave as his presence relieved them of their suffering. Each time he prepared to leave they cried out begging him not to go. At last the Raja said to Dharam Raj the judge at the gate to the other world, "I shall go only if you send all these souls with me, otherwise I shall stay here also." Dharam Raj said, "I am the servant of Waheguru. On what account (of good or charitable deeds) should I release them?" Raja Janak thought for a while and said, "Give them the fruit of my *Naam simran* of one *ghari* (equal to 24 minutes)." Dharam Raj accepted and weighed the *Naam simran* of one *ghari* against the sins of all the souls in hell. The *Naam simran* of one *ghari* weighed heavier. Dharam Raj released all the souls from hell. After this a separate direct route to *Sach Khand* of those who do *Naam simran* was established.

The souls in hell had not done any *Naam simran*, but due to Raja Janak's arrival, their suffering was eliminated. In exchange for the fruit of one *ghari* (24 minutes) *simran* they were given a place in heaven. In the same way, if in any family, there is someone like Raja Janak who does *Naam simran*, then all members of that family are saved. And so, because of the *simran* of Pralaad, his 21 generations were redeemed. Bhai Gurdas Ji says in one of his *Vaars* (ballad):-

"Raja Janak was a great king as well as a saint, who remained unaffected by worldly temptations.

He proceeded to heaven in the company of singing angels and holy men.

Hearing cries coming from hell, he went there and saw people in great torment.

He said to Dharamraj - the presiding angel of Hell: "Release these unfortunate people."

Dharamraj replied, "I am only the servant of God, my master."

Then Janak put the weight of the Holy Naam on one side of a pair of spiritual scales; on the other side he placed the burden of the sins of the hell-stricken.

Behold! The total weight of the sins was not even a quarter of the immeasurable weight of the Holy Name.

The sinners fetters were broken, and they were released.

Salvation and the means of liberation are within the powers of saintly persons."
(Bhai Gurdaas *Vaar* 10 Pauri 5)

I told the children, "I was six years old when I started *simran*. The soul of little children is pure for they have not sinned. They are free from worldly attachment and the five evil influences (of lust, anger, greed, attachment and arrogance). For that reason *Naam* resides more easily deep in the mind. Your soul is pure. If *Naam* finds a place in your mind then you will be happy and contented all your life. As Pralaad's 21 generations received salvation so you can seek salvation of your 21 generations.

"After taking *Amrit* I started working. For 26 years I did *Langar sewa* at the *tavi* (hot iron plate for cooking *prasaaday* i.e. *Langar rot is*) while reciting *Naam*. No one knew that I was reciting *Naam* and encouraging others around me to do the same. I had no other desire. I would eat food at home. So much wealth of *Naam* was stored up that I myself did not know how much. Guru *Ji* was pleased and blessed us the *Naam simran* in His own presence from 4.00 to 5.00 in the morning.

"Recite yourselves and inspire others to recite *Naam*, that is the Guru's teaching.

Join the Holy Congregation in meditating on the *Naam*, and obtain freedom from coming and going (i.e. from the cycle of birth and death)."

"First you have to do *sewa* and *simran* and get together the wealth of *Naam*. Guru *Ji* will be kind and give you the strength to do *sewa*, for *sewa* is a gift of the Guru. Whosoever meditates on the Name of Waheguru, that person's earnings (of *Naam* and *sewa*) are not wasted.

Waheguru *Ji* always gives the reward. Then, as Guru *Ji* says, this stage arrives:-

"You eat and spend this wealth, it is not exhausted; here and hereafter, it remains with you. Loading the treasure, the Guru has given it to Nanak and his mind is imbued with God's Love."
(SGGS p. 496)

"Eat from the wealth of *Naam* and distribute it to others; there will be no shortage. This wealth stays with a person in this world and the next.

"Fill your stores with the wealth of the Lord. Nanak bows in humility and reverence to the Perfect Guru." (SGGS p. 295)

"You should also attend the *simran* in the morning. You will be surprised that one 7 year old child attends *simran* for the full one hour daily. *Simran* is done in many Gurdwaras, you too should make the effort. With Satguru *Ji*'s grace the sangat is over a hundred.

"Meditate continually on the Name of the Lord within your heart. Thus you shall save all your companions and associates. || 1 || My Guru is always with me, near at hand. Meditating, meditating in remembrance on Him, I cherish Him forever. || 1 || Pause || Your actions seem so sweet to me. Nanak begs for the treasure of the *Naam*, the Name of the Lord. || 2 ||"
(SGGS p. 394)

Whatever a person does, it is for own benefit. I thought the same, that by reciting *Naam* I should seek salvation. No individual can achieve salvation without reciting *Naam*. For salvation *sewa* and *simran* are essential. I accepted this as Guru Ji's *Hukam* (Order) and started *simran* wholeheartedly.

"Your Ambrosial Name is deep and profound. That person is liberated, in whose heart You dwell. The Guru cuts away all his bonds; O Servant Nanak, he is absorbed in the poise of intuitive peace. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 101)

"Remembering, remembering God, his Lord and Master in meditation, the Messenger of Death does not approach him. Liberation and heaven are found in the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy; his humble servant finds the home of the Lord." (SGGS p. 682)

I thought only about myself, but *Naam* has such attraction, that many have started on this path to salvation. Raja Janak, by donating his *simran* of one *ghari* (equals to 24 minutes), redeemed all the souls suffering in hell; so why shouldn't those Gursikhs achieve salvation, who do *simran* early in the morning.

The Second Panjab

(Southall)

The social environment of Southall is very similar to Panjab. The main shopping centre of Southall (The Broadway) resembles Jalandhar city. Most of the shops are run by the Panjabis. Here, our people have no shortage of Panjabi food. Green vegetables and all sorts of fruit are available all through the year. Panjabi sweets of all varieties are available. You cannot get so many Panjabi/Indian varieties even in India. Some shops remain open from eight in the morning to eight in the evening. Our people are so keen to expand businesses that they work very hard. Some like to eat outside. There are beautiful restaurants here which remain open until eleven at night. *Samosas* are so popular, that even the white people have started eating them; they also enjoy eating other Indian food. Southall is so famous now that people come to do shopping from other areas and also eat food here. There are big crowds on Sundays. People come to pay their respects at the Gurdwaras, Mandars (Hindu temples) and Mosques and also do shopping for the week at the same time. One can also buy cloth of all types. There are many shops of gold ornaments. Anyone coming here from India or Pakistan feels as if he is in Panjab.

There are radio and television broadcasts in our languages. There are programmes for children. If there is a special day for any religion then radio and television are pleased to arrange special information programmes. For example, during Vaisakhi, a direct programme is received from Amritsar for three or four days. There are many Gurdwaras, Mandars and Mosques in Southall. The most famous Gurdwara is Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall. This Gurdwara was started on the 300th *Prakash Utsav* (Birthday, but also see Glossary) Gurpurab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The Gurpurab was celebrated on a big scale at the Royal Albert Hall, London. There was a milk dairy building where this Gurdwara is located. Gurbachan Singh Gill helped to arrange for the loan to buy this place. An office was constructed by Bachitar Singh when he became President. When Giani Amolak Singh became President, he bought the place for the car park. Malkeet Singh Grewal, as President constructed the place for the *Langar* and the Young Sikhs made the *Sach Khand* rooms (place where Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is kept at night in a state of *Sukh-aasan*, "resting position").

This is the most famous Gurdwara outside Punjab. Despite its fame and huge income, no party has taken the trouble to build a new Gurdwara. Everyone bought or built their own houses but no one bothered to build *Guru Ghar* (Guru's House).

President Himat Singh Sohi and the Committee, with the support of the Sangat, repaid all the loan of 800,000 pounds owed by the Gurdwara to the bank. They received full support from the Sangat. A considerable amount has also been saved for a new building. With Guru Ji's blessing a new Gurdwara will be built in the near future. All this is happening with the full support of the Sangat. Here, there is regular flow of *Bani* and *Naam*.

The *Prakash* of *Guru Maharaj* (Guru King) is done at 2.45 in the morning. Following the *Hukamnama*, the *Nit Nem* of Five Banis is recited. Then *Naam simran* takes place from 4.00 to 5.00 a.m. There is such enthusiasm about simran that a large number of Sangat get together at that time. From 5.00 to 6.30 a.m. *Kirtan* of *Asa Di Vaar* is done. The Sangat listen keenly. After this the *katha* (interpretation and explanation) of the main *Vaak* (*Hukamnama* or Order) of the day, read from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, following the *Prakash* in the morning, is done. And so the programme continues. From 10.00 to 11.00 in the morning, the *simran* is done for the second

time. On two days a week there are special programmes for ladies. After *simran*, the ladies do *Paatths* of Sukhmani, Chaupaaee Sahib followed by *Shabad Kirtan*.

In the same way the evening programme starts. The *Paatth* of Rehras starts at 5.00 o'clock. The *Sangat* benefits by listening to Kirtan until 6.30 p.m.; after which, serial *Katha* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji continues. The *Ardaas* for the completion (*samapti*) of programmes is done at 8.00 in the evening. The following day's programme begins again at 2.45. This is the daily programme at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall.

Here the *sewa* of the Langar goes on for 24 hours and is prepared with great cleanliness while Waheguru *simran* goes on.

"Instruct your soul, wear the uniform of self-discipline and remember God's Name silently and continuously in your own heart.

Thus, your body will always shine like gold and the demon of death will not frighten you."
(Shabad Hazaray, Patshahi 10)

Those who do *sewa* remain untouched by pain and suffering. I have noticed that the ladies who do *sewa* in the Langar suffer from no illness. These ladies leave their families and do *sewa* of the *Sangat*, treating *Sangat* like their own family.

As has been mentioned before, in the Hindu religion, in very hot weather of *Jetth* (lunar month falling between mid-May and mid-June), to please God, the Sadhus light five fires and inflict great suffering on themselves. Their effort is wasted because they do not recite Waheguru's Name. But Guru Ji allowed the opportunity of this difficult *sewa* on the hot *tavi* (iron plate for cooking *prasaaday* or rotis) in the *Langar*. This *sewa* bears much fruit. When cooking *prasaaday* on the hot *tavi*, the hands are purified and the tongue is purified by reciting "Waheguru". Some ladies, as a matter of principle, attend to do *sewa* and *simran* while the *prasaaday* are being made. I have seen these ladies participating in *sewa* and *simran* for many years.

Sikh Youth Camps

Sikhi has been preached more effectively in other countries than in Panjab (the home of *Sikhi*). *Gurmatt* camps were started, at first in Malaysia, to spread the word about *Sikhi*. The Sikhs in Malaysia are keen to preach *Sikhi*. The wealthy Sikhs distributed *Gutkas* (see Glossary) of Sukhmani Sahib and Nit Nem, free of charge. The young Sikhs take a leading part in preaching *Sikhi*. They distributed *Gutkas* of Asa di Vaar translated in English.

The second camp was started by the Sikh Missionary Society (UK), about twenty years ago, and it is running well. Two or three hundred children from all over Europe take part in this camp. The children are taught about the Sikh religion and how to read Gurbani correctly. They also enjoy games and sports. One day is reserved for an outing to some interesting place. Tabla and harmonium are also taught by the Society. Now camps are held all over the UK and in other countries like Canada and America.

In England a Khalsa camp is held in July during the summer holidays. Children from all over Europe take part and number from 250 to 300. Many Singh and Singhani *sewadars* take part. There are separate camping arrangements for the ladies. Much is taught about the Sikh way of life. Senior scholars are invited to talk about different aspects of the religion and Sikh religious history. In July 1996, the Jathedar of Akal Takhat Sahib, Prof. Manjit Singh Ji, also took part. He was pleased to see so many children. He thanked Dr Dupinder Singh saying, "You are doing a great community *sewa* by holding this camp. It would be most beneficial, if well educated young Sikhs like you preach *Sikhi*."

One is so pleased to see such programmes, especially when little children do Guru Ji's *sewa*. In this camp, many Singhs and Singhanis wear the *keski* (small turban). Others are impressed by the ladies wearing *keskis*, for Guru Ji says:-

Khalsa is my special form; In the Khalsa I reside. (Sarab Loh Granth).

Many young girls develop an interest in wearing a *keski*. Girls are shown how to wear a *dastar* (turban) and *dastars* are given free by the camp. Bibi Manjit Kaur and Bhai Onkar Singh draw pictures of the children in full *Sikhi* dress and put them on display at the camp. They take this initiative to teach something about *Sikhi*, when there is a *Raaen Subaaee*, or a camp is held or if there is any special programme.

The children join in the *Nit Nem* and *simran* in the morning. The children themselves do *Nit Nem*, *Ardaas* and then read the *Hukamnama*. They read the interpretation of the *Hukamnama* in English and discuss it. Two children help a *sewadar* to make *Prasaad* (also called *Deg* - see Glossary) and to bring it to the *Darbar* hall (where there is the *Prakaash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). All join together to do the *Kirtan* of Asa di Vaar.

After the mid-day *langar* (lunch) children undertake physical education. Some children take part in *Gatka* (*Gatka* is the traditional Khalsa art of self defence. A stick is used in place of real weapons and the art depends on agility and highly disciplined and rhythmic movement of feet, arms and hands. Sometimes a small shield is held in the left hand and a three feet stick with a handle (representing a sword) in the other. Longer sticks are used for other movements and forms of defence. It is an art which is being revived now). Some children play games like football and

hockey. Children are also taught *kirtan*. They sing the *shabads* they have learnt during the day to the *Sangat* after the Rehras. The child who is able to learn the harmonium or tabla during the week and sings a *Shabad* is given a harmonium or tabla free. Children are delighted.

To make programmes for a Gurmatt camp the *Mukh Sewadars* (leading workers) have to work very hard regarding planning, resources and arrangements. At the expense of their own work, they work day and night to make the camp a success. The children are kept so busy that they forget their homes and families. They forget what day it is. They only realise that it is the last day when prizes are distributed to the children.

At the conclusion of the last camp, before the children dispersed, Dr Dupinder Singh said, "You must all learn Panjabi. We came from Panjab, but you were born here. You must be able to understand Panjabi (Panjabi language and Gurmukhi script in which Panjabi is written). Our Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is in Panjabi (i.e. Gurmukhi script), if you do not learn Punjabi then how would you do *Paatth*? The girls were persuaded to attend the Gurdwara, to wear own Sikh dress and to converse with children in Panjabi. The doctor thanked all the *sewadars* and the children. As the girls were about to sit in their separate coaches, they embraced each other and their eyes were wet.

I asked Bibi Gurdeep Kaur, "Why are they crying?" Gurdeep Kaur told me, "These are tears of happiness. They are saying that they have learnt much in this camp, and that they cannot forget the affection of Bibi Navleen Kaur. They feel as if they have spent a week in heaven. All were getting together in the morning to do *simran*, to listen to *kirtan*, and all this will not be available at home."

On another occasion, on 17 August 1997, we started from Southall for Manchester to take part in a *Sikhi* camp. We completed the journey in three and a half hours and reached Manchester. We saw many beautiful scenes on the way. This camp was at an army centre and there were hills all around it. The road wound around the slopes like a snake.

When we reached the camp Bhai Santokh Singh received us warmly and showed me to my room. This was a room of some army official. It was seven in the evening. Bhai Sahib told us about the evening programme, that the children first did one hour *simran* and at that time they were enjoying the evening *kirtan*. The *Paatth* of Rehras was to follow.

We went straight to the *Darbar* and listened to the *kirtan*. After Rehras, the *Ardaas* for the completion of the evening programme was at 8.30 p.m. After the *Paatth* of Kirtan Sohila, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was taken to the special room for *Sukh-aasan*. All the *Sangat* (children and *sewadars*) followed the Guru Ji's *swari* (person carrying Guru Granth Sahib Ji respectfully on his head). I was very pleased to see the great respect shown by the children to Guru Ji. All followed behind the *swari* doing *simran* with devotion.

When the *swari* reached the *Sukh-aasan* room, the *Sangat* stood outside the room and recited this *Shabad*:-

"Wherever my True Guru goes and sits, that place is beautiful, O Lord King. The Guru's Sikhs seek out that place; they take the dust and apply it to their faces. The works of the Guru's Sikhs, who meditate on the Lord's Name, are approved. Those who worship the True Guru, O Nanak — the Lord causes them to be worshipped in turn." (SGGS p. 450)

After the completion of the programme the Secretary announced that the *swari* of Guru Ji would be brought to the *Darbar* hall in the morning at four o' clock. All should get up in good time to attend. That the first half hour would be devoted to *simran*.

In the morning at four o' clock, the children assembled as *Sangat* before the *Sukh-aasan* room, reciting "Waheguru" and prayed as Kabir Ji says in this Shabad:-

"I am a dog at Your Court, Lord. I open my snout and bark before it." (SGGS p. 969)

It was a moment of bliss; it was early in the morning and very peaceful. Listening to the recitation of "Waheguru", even the birds in the sky started chirping as if they too were singing the praises of Waheguru. After doing *simran* for half an hour and *Ardaas*, Guru Ji's *swari* was taken to the *Darbar* hall.

When I saw this sight, the image of Sri Harmandar Sahib came before me. As at *Amrit Vela* the *swari* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is taken from Sri Akal Takhat to Darbar Sahib.

After *Prakaash* of Guru Ji, the *simran* started again until 6.00 a.m. From 6.00 to 7.00 *kirtan* was sung followed by *Nit Nem*. After that all had breakfast. If a child was late and did not join in the *Nit Nem*, he or she was given a *Gutka* to do *Nit Nem* before taking breakfast. After that the children dispersed to take a rest. From 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. the children were taught about *Gursikhi* - the Sikh way of life. After lunch followed sports. Children were kept very busy. And so the evening programme started. That was the daily programme.

When the children would go for their rest, I would do *sewa* in the Langar. Ladies were doing *sewa* in the *Langar* with much dedication. I thanked them for their great service, for it is not easy to make food for 250 people. The ladies who worked in the *Langar* for the whole week, were Bibi Rashpal Kaur, Surinder Kaur, Amarjit Kaur, Sukhwinder Kaur, Jagdeep Kaur and Kulwant Kaur.

I was very pleased to note that these children showed honesty and upright conduct. They did not take anyone else's things. There were one or two incidents which clearly showed this. The ladies doing *sewa* did not even care for their things. One day Bibi Kamaljit Kaur was doing washing up in the kitchen and left her watch. She found it there the following morning. Bibi Jagdeep Kaur forgot her camera in the *Langar*. She got it from the office; someone had taken it there.

"To take what rightfully belongs to another, is like a Muslim eating pork, or a Hindu eating beef." (SGGS p. 141)

In Africa, friendship developed between a Sikh and a white man. Both would go for a walk every evening. One day as they were walking, the Sikh found a wallet. There was quite a lot of money in it. His mind wavered and he said to his white friend, "God has sent us a gift." His friend replied, "It does not belong to us. We have not earned this money." The Sikh said, "We found it; let us share it half- half." His white friend was not happy and said, "Let us announce it on the radio so that it can be returned to the owner." The Sikh still insisted on keeping it. His friend said, "When I went to India, I had the opportunity to go to Amritsar. A *katha* (see Glossary) was in progress there. I asked the Sikh sitting next to me to explain what was being said. He said the Giani Ji is saying, that if one eats what belongs to another then, for a Muslim it is like eating (the forbidden) pork, and for the Hindu like eating (the sacred) cow." Hearing this the Sikh was embarrassed, thinking, "I read *Bani*

daily, yet it has had no effect on me. I have not followed Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings." His friend said, "If the person who has lost this money gets it, that person will be so pleased."

When, in due course, the person who had lost the wallet, came to get it following a radio announcement, he said, "I had withdrawn this money from the bank for the marriage of my daughter." He was delighted and blessed them, "For me you are saints. You have returned my wallet. May you be as happy as I am today, all your life."

Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji, Sant Maan Singh Ji and Sant Resham Singh Ji also took part in the *Sikhi* camp and gave talks. Bhai Jiwan Singh Ji and Sant Maan Singh Ji sang Gurbani *kirtan* and Sant Resham Singh Ji did Gurbani *katha*. On the final day the children of Southall performed a *Gatka* (Sikh martial art) demonstration which was liked by all.

I have taken part in many camps in Canada, America, Malaysia and England. However, this year's camp by the British Organisation of Sikh Students (BOSS) was quite special. It was a most exhilarating experience to listen to the children doing Waheguru *simran* at four in the morning while standing. If *simran* is done with the same dedication throughout the Sikh world, Guru Ji will be very pleased with his children:-

"Whatever I ask for from my Lord and Master, he gives that to me. Whatever the Lord's slave Nanak utters with his mouth, proves to be true, here and hereafter." (SGGS p. 681)

Bhai Jagjit Singh spoke to the children in the camp, "We were born in Sikh families, yet we are so lazy. The white people who adopt *Sikhi*, are better than us as they keep the full *Sikhi rehat*. We were born into the Sikh religion, why are we less keen? Today Sikh youth wear turbans and also earrings. With such behaviour, how would Guru Gobind Singh Ji give us our own rule (Khalsa Raj)?

"When I took *Amrit*, the Panj Piaray preached that the ladies should not get their noses or ears pierced (for wearing gold ornaments), But these days, even the sons of Singhs have started doing that. This is what I read in the "*Sura*" (Punjabi) journal recently:-

"Are you the Sikhs of that *Kalgian Waale* (Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji), who sacrificed his whole family so that you may live? Are you the descendants of those martyrs, who, for *Sikhi*, were sawed alive, scalped alive, dismembered alive, were broken on the wheels, boiled alive and whose heads were carried on spears; those martyrs who underwent unspeakable suffering but did not surrender their faith; they kept their Khalsa identity and kept *Sikhi* spotless? "Are you the descendants of those warrior mothers, who accepted into their laps their little children cut to pieces and wore necklaces made from those pieces, who ground large quantities of grain on hand-mills, who fought in wars side-by side with their Sikh brothers, and who remained true to their husbands and *Sikhi* till their dying breath? Are you the brothers of Sahib Fateh Singh and Sahib Jorawar Singh (younger sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji) who remained fearless until the end, who did not waver from *Sikhi*, who refused to give up their Sikh identity but accepted to be bricked alive?

"If you are the descendants of those great warriors from whom kingdoms once trembled; whose sword was the shield of the weak and the poor and a sharp dagger for the tyrants; if you are the Singhs of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, then why do you dishonour the name of your Guru? Why do you desecrate your hair? Why do you damage your wholesome image and identity? Why are you breaking the *Sikhi* code (of behaviour for a balanced, healthy and responsible life)? Why are you shunning the ambrosial food of Naam Bani in preference to

poisonous drugs? Why are you shunning Guru-centred behaviour in preference to ego- centric behaviour? Lured by greed and selfishness, why are you dishonouring your turban (the Sikh "Crown", symbolic of honour, dignity and sovereignty)? Why are you getting lost in non-Sikh faiths? Why have you lost your uniqueness? Why do you not recognise your heritage? Why have the lion cubs, by mixing with sheep, forgotten their roar and resorted to "baa-baa" instead?"

The children were very much impressed by these words. They joined together to pray to Guru Gobind Singh Ji, "O True King, You love *rehat*. Bless us that we too should have affection for *rehat*- Grant us the gifts of *Sikhi* and *rehat*" They accepted in their minds to keep the full *rehat*.

"God, the Great Giver, has become merciful; He has listened to my prayer. He has saved His servant, and put ashes into the mouth of the slanderer." (SGGS p. 818)

Nagar Kirtan (Local Sikh religious procession - see Glossary)

All Gurburabs are celebrated at the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Southall, on the actual day. An *Akhand Paatth* is commenced for *Bhog* (completion - see Glossary) on the day of the Gurburab. If the Gurburab does not fall on a Sunday then, it is celebrated on Sunday also. Every week, at least one or two *Akhand Paatths* are done. On every Bank Holiday, either a *Raaen Subaaee* (all night *kirtan*) or a *kirtan* programme until mid-night is held. *Amrit Sanchar* is held on *Vaisakhi* and the *Prakaash Utsavs* (Birthday Gurburabs) of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. A special *Dhadi Darbar* is held on any *Shaheedi* (martyrdom) *Gurburab*. At this *dhadi* programme, martial ballad type of poetry is sung to the accompaniment of *sarangi* (string instrument played with a bow) and *dhads* (hand-held small drums). Sometimes these *dhadi* programmes continue until mid-night. People celebrate the New Year by going to the Gurdwara. The *Paatth* of *Mool Mantar* is recited on 31st December, during the last few minute before the clock strikes 12.00 midnight. It is an exhilarating time. All do *Ardaas*, "O' True King, let the coming year be spent in peace and happiness." Thousands of *Sangat* join in the *Ardaas* of the New Year. This wonderful sight is worth seeing. It is most enjoyable.

Twice a year a Nagar Kirtan starts from the Singh Sabha Gurdwara. This year too a huge *Nagar Kirtan* started from the Gurdwara. Led by the *Panj Piaray*, the *Swari* (Holy Carriage) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji started after *Ardaas* at 11.30 a.m. A fireworks display was held before the *Nagar Kirtan* started. The *Nagar Kirtan* proceeded along Victoria Road, Norwood Road and King Street towards the Broadway. The *Sangats* were taking part with great enthusiasm. The children, holding *kesri* (orange coloured) flags, were hailing *Jaikaras* (Sikh cry):- *Bole So Nihal*: Whosoever utters will be blessed *Sat Sri Akal*: The Eternal God is One and Only Reality

Kirtan was being sung with the Guru Ji's *Swari*. The *Sangats* were joining in the kirtan with great devotion. There were special vehicles for the elderly. The *Sangat* sitting on the vehicles were also doing *kirtan*. "Waheguru" was being recited on all trucks, and on one truck the ladies were singing:-

"Hail Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Himself the Guru and the disciple
The plume wearing Guru Gobind Singh Ji
The hawk carrying Guru Gobind Singh Ji
Hail Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Himself the Guru and the disciple."

They were repeating these lines again and again and also doing *Shabad kirtan*. On another truck young men and women were doing "Waheguru" *simran*. They were also singing a poem:-

"When Guru Gobind Singh Ji came, the steel rings (*chakar* worn over the Sikh turban) glistened
The father of the Guru was Tegh Bahadur and Mata Gujri, the mother
When Guru Gobind Singh Ji came, the steel rings glistened, the steel rings glistened.
The Guru was born at Patna, he settled at Anandpur When Guru Gobind Singh Ji came, the steel rings glistened, the steel rings glistened.
Under the Guru the blue steed, in his hand the hawk When Guru Gobind Singh Ji came, the steel rings glistened, the steel rings glistened.
The Guru wore a beautiful pair of shoes decorated with silver thread When Guru Gobind Singh Ji came, the steel rings glistened, the steel rings glistened."

All the *Sangat* sitting on all types of vehicles were doing kirtan or reciting "Waheguru". It was a most impressive sight. All were so keen and so very happy and contented. Those who were unable to attend this *Nagar Kirtan* for some reason e.g. for attending a marriage or some other engagement, regretted missing it very much when told how impressive and enjoyable it was. The *Sangat* are always very keen on doing *sewa*. Wherever, the *Swari* of Guru Ji passed, there were elaborate arrangements for eating food. This *sewa* continued from the beginning till the completion of the programme. There was all variety of food: *pakauras*, *samosas*, *sholay/bhaturay*, *ladoo*, crisps and juice etc. was distributed. The Holy *Prashaad* was also being distributed. The fruit shopkeepers had put out for distribution to the *Sangat* boxes of all types of fruit: oranges, apples, bananas etc. Tea and *langar* was also served. The non-Sikh children also joined the *Nagar Kirtan* for they too were enjoying the food. They were delighted and asked when the next *Nagar Kirtan* was going to be held. There were many *sewadars* with bags for collecting the rubbish and keeping the streets clean. People showed great respect all along the route taken by Guru Ji's *Swari*.

Flowers were presented by the President of the Ramgarhia Gurdwara and the President of the Hindu Mandar. The *Sangat* was in thousands and the procession was about a mile long. Of course, the procession would have been much longer if people had proceeded in a more organised way, say five by five. The crowds were not organised but were very well behaved, keen and happy. In this country time is regarded as valuable. The *Sangat* had occupied pavement on both sides of the road. Seeing the *Nagar kirtan* the non-Sikhs were saying, "It is a great procession; however, these people have been living in this country for so many years; they should learn how to walk in an orderly manner *Sangat* should leave one half of the road free for any emergency traffic e.g. for fire and ambulance services and other emergencies. How would those emergency service vehicles pass through in this situation?" That is true. The *Sangat* do not pay attention to this aspect. They should follow behind Guru Ji's *Swari* and not walk in front or on the sides. The *Sangat* which meets the *Swari* on the way should do *matha tekan* and follow behind where they can find a gap, or they should go right at the back.

When the *Nagar Kirtan* reached the Broadway, I noticed the Gurdwara President walking to the back. I asked him, "The *Sangat* is going forwards and you are walking to the back; what is the matter?" He replied, "I am a bit concerned that the youngsters are not causing any trouble. Also, I would like to see how many *Sangat* are there at the back." In the same manner, the *Nagar Kirtan* wound its way along Carlisle Avenue, North Road and South Road to Singh Sabha, Havelock Road reaching there at 3.45 p.m. The completion *Ardaas* was done by the Head Granthi, Giani Shamsher Singh. There were lots of fireworks. Bhai Amar Singh Thindh thanked the Police and the *Sangat*.

During the *Nagar Kirtan*, a young Sikh came and, grabbing the speaker from my hand, started shouting the slogan "The Khalsa shall rule" (*Raj karega Khalsa*). He had cut his beard and his turban was like a *topi* (hat).

After the *Nagar Kirtan*, I asked him, "You are shouting slogans of Khalistan, are you a Khalsa?" He replied, "No, I am preparing to be one, but it is very difficult; I am still thinking." I explained to him, "Heed Guru Ji's Words that only the one who keeps the *rehat* is a Sikh. First keep *rehat*, then take *Amrit* and belong to the Guru. Then raise the slogan of Khalsa Raj. To achieve own rule you have to make sacrifices.

"Recognise him as a true warrior, who fights for the weak and the down-trodden. He may be cut to pieces, but he never leaves the field of battle." (SGGS p. 1105)

"If you want Khalsa Raj then you have to become a saint- soldier. If you cannot wield a sword then Guru Ji offers another way"

"He alone is called a warrior, who is attached to the Lord's Love in this age. Through the Perfect True Guru, he conquers his own soul, and then everything comes under his control."
(SGGS p. 679)

"In this Age of Kalyug, the greatest warrior is one who would recite Naam. He acquires all powers. When Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji was being tortured on the hot *tavi* (iron plate), Hajrat Mia Mir said to Guru Ji, "Give me the permission to destroy Delhi and Lahore." (Guru Ji asked him to be patient, for what he was going through was in Waheguru's *Hukam* (Will)).

"Baba Deep Singh Ji placed his head on the palm of his hand and challenged the enemy. All this is the power of *Naam*. Whosoever recites *Naam* will become a saint-soldier capable of ruling the whole creation."

"The Naam is the Support of all creatures. The Naam is the Support of the earth and solar systems." (SGGS p. 284)

The Test of True Sikhs

The 527th *Prakaash Utsav* of the Wondrous Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was celebrated with great splendour. A huge Nagar Kirtan started from Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Southall, on 24 November, 1996.

"The True Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, appeared (in this world), the mist (of ignorance) was lifted and there was light in the world. As, when the sun rises, the stars become invisible, and the darkness disappears.

(Bhai Gurdas: Vaar 1 Pauri 27)

Slight drizzling started during the *Ardaas* for starting the *Nagar Kirtan* (see Glossary). Nature thought, "Why not test the Sikhs to see how much affection they have for Guru Nanak Dev Ji?" *Nagar Kirtan* has been held many times before e.g. the one celebrating the 500th *Prakaash Utsav* of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and others before that. However, the weather did not become this bad before. Rain started with the *Nagar Kirtan*.

"Even in violent storms and torrential rain, I go out to catch a glimpse of my Guru. || 13 || Even though the oceans and the salty seas are very vast, the *Gursikh* will cross over it to get to his Guru. || 14 || (SGGS p. 757)

As the rain started, the *Sangat* chanting, "*Dhan* Guru Nanak" (Praise be to Guru Nanak) also started walking behind the *Panj Piaray* and the *Swari* (Carriage) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Protected by Guru Ji's spirituality, the *Panj Piaray* were walking barefooted in freezing weather. As I saw, despite such cold weather, their feet did not go numb. The *Nagar Kirtan* concluded after three and a half hours. Tea was served all along the route of the *Nagar Kirtan*. With tea, snacks such as *pakauras*, *samosas*, *ladoo*, *sholay/bhatooray* etc. were being served. Coke, juice, crisps and sweets were also being served.

"When the treasure of the Lord of the Universe is opened, those who are pre-destined, receive it. The Guru has given me the one jewel, and my mind and body have become peaceful and tranquil. || 3 ||" (SGGS p. 612)

It seemed as if Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji had opened His own stores. The *Sangat* did not care for the rain. The procession kept on moving forward. Everyone's clothes were wet. Despite wet clothes the *Sangat* kept on singing "*Dhan*" (Praise be to) Guru Nanak; *Dhan* Guru Nanak". Even little children were walking. Would Baba Nanak not hear the call of the little children? Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji is so generous, He will certainly grant the gift of *Sikhi* to these children (*Dhan* expresses wonderment and high praise. The usual expression is *Dhan Dhan* Sri Guru (followed by the name of the Guru Ji).

"Walk even one step towards the Guru; And the True Guru will walk millions of steps to welcome you."

Repeat, even once, the *Mantra* given by the True Guru; And the Guru will bless you: By His Love you will repeat it again and again. With devotion and reverence, donate even one coin to the Guru; And the Guru will bless you with all treasures (Gurmatt, further clarified by Bhai Gurdas (Vaar 13.1) stresses that the only *Mantar* (Panjabi pronunciation of *mantra*) is that of Waheguru's

Name and no other. In other words *Gurmatt* (Guru's teaching) does not subscribe to the Vedic mystical/magical formulae (the *mantras*) nor does *Gurmatt* accept the spells of such *mantras* which spread superstition. No *mantar* is greater than Waheguru's *Naam*).

The True Guru is the Treasure of Mercy. His Glory is Infinite and Boundless. I bow, I bow, I bow, I bow - Always and forever, Again and again.
(Bhai Gurdaas *Kabit* 111)

Every person was chanting "Waheguru, Waheguru". The procession was so long that one could not see how many people were in front or behind. There were two little children in the truck with us. Their teeth were rattling with cold. Despite all the cold, they did not waver and took a full part in the *Nagar Kirtan*. The children of the Sikh workshop did charming kirtan. Bibi Navleen Kaur sang this Shabad:-

"I abandoned and lost my Beloved Friend, O Nanak; I was fooled by the transitory colour of the safflower, which fades away. I did not know Your value, O my Friend; without You, I am not worth even half a shell." (SGGS p. 963)

Milap Singh's son Pushpinder Singh did the difficult *sewa* of playing the tabla. It was raining and so cold. His fingers were numb but he carried on regardless. Water leaked into the harmonium. Navleen's fingers were numb as well. Still they did not waver and performed the kirtan *sewa*.

When it really started pouring, then many were looking behind to see how many *Sangat* were still behind. But the *Sangat* kept on walking as keen as ever. No one left the *Nagar Kirtan* due to the rain. President Himat Singh Sohi was very pleased that the *Sangat* were co-operating with great devotion.

In Praise of the True Name (Naam)

"Fill your stores with the wealth of the Lord. Nanak bows in humility and reverence to the Perfect Guru." (SGGS p. 295)

People have much worldly wealth. One sees many wealthy people. In order to become famous, a *seth* (rich Hindu) in Delhi has constructed a Mandar in his own name. It is called the Birla Mandar. By working day and night people leave behind wealth for their families, but they do not make any effort to gain a place of respect in the world hereafter. For that, they need the true wealth.

In the Sikh faith there have been, and there are many saintly people who have and continue to earn the true wealth. The worldly wealth becomes their servant. They have no shortage of wealth in this world and they also earn a place of respect in the next world. This is the praise of the True Name (*Naam*). The wealth of *Naam* was earned by many great saints. Some examples are: Sant Baba Nidhan Singh Ji of Hazoor Sahib, Sant Ishar Singh Ji *Rarewaalay*, Sant Baba Nand Singh Ji *kaleran-waalay*, Sant Attar Singh Ji *Mastuanay-waalay*, Baba Karam Singh Ji *Hoti Mardan*, Baba Puran Singh Ji *Kericho-waalay*, Sant Sewa Singh Ji, Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji, Sant Baba Jawala Singh Ji *Harkhowal*, Sant Baba Harnam Singh Ji *Rampur Khera Waalay*, and many other great saints, who have stored such quantities of this true wealth that it cannot be exhausted (*waalay* means "of" in Panjabi e.g. we could have a Sant in future of Southall - *waalay*). This true wealth enables people to achieve salvation.

Sant Baba Puran Singh Ji *Kericho-waalay* has left an inexhaustible amount of the wealth of *Naam*. He started a series of *Sampat Akhand Paatths* in East Africa and England. *Sampat Paatth* means that a base *Shabad* e.g. Mool Mantar or any other *shabad*, is fixed for the whole of one Akhand Patth. This base *Shabad* is then recited again and again at the start of every *shabad* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Three *paatthis* (those who do *paatth*) do the *Sampat Akhand Patth* together and fifteen *paatthis* are required for *paatthi* shifts. Many *Singhs* and *Singhanis* take part in the voluntary *sewa* of *Sampat Akhand Paatths*. The *Paatth* is completed in eleven days. The spiritual rewards are greatest with *Sampat Akhand Paatths*. In the same way, Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji started the *Raaen Subaaee Kirtan* programmes.

Nowadays, Gursikhs living in India and abroad benefit spiritually from all night *kirtans*. As *kirtan* is most beneficial for achieving salvation in the Age of *Kalyug*, so Guru Ji blessed the Gursikhs. Similarly, with Guru Ji's blessing and the support of *Saadh Sangat*, the early morning *simran* was started. Many individuals are making their lives successful by doing early morning *simran*. The early morning *simran* started first at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Southall. Gradually, the practice spread to many other Gurdwaras in England; for example Ramgarhia Sabha, Southall; Gurdwaras in East Ham, London, Coventry, Bebe Nanaki Gurdwara Birmingham and Gurdwaras in Canada and Singapore. This is a great initiative. That Sikh is most fortunate, who sits in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to do *simran*.

Pure Soul

(A)

One day Bibi Kulwant Kaur told me that a *simran* programme had been started for little children in the library of the Singh Sabha Gurdwara. That four or five years old children were doing *simran* on harmonium and tabla. She asked me to inform others as many *Sangat* knew me.

Hearing this I went to see. At that time, I also had Simrat Singh, age two and a half years, with me. This child sat right in front near the harmonium and started doing "Waheguru" *simran*. Seeing the children doing *simran* in this way, I remembered my own childhood. If the parents wish, they can create a religious interest in their children from childhood. For example, the mother of Farid used sweets (*misri*) to get him interested in God worship. A child's mind is simple and pure. A child will get interested in whatever guidance is given; just as small branches will turn whichever way you bend them. However, as they get older, they become more difficult to bend. In the same way one forgets God when one gets caught in worldly matters and attractions.

"O my Dear Lord of Souls, one who meets with the Sat Sangat, the True Congregation, is saved."
(SGGS p. 495)

Early in the morning, *Kalyug* (see Glossary) spreads its warm and inviting blanket over everyone; those blessed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, do get up early in the morning and, with the *Saadh Sangat*, recite *Naam* in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It can be seen now, that while the parents are sleeping, the children are reciting *Naam* in the presence of Guru Ji. Some children walk to the Gurdwara in very cold weather and attend *Naam simran* in the morning but the parents remain ignorant. Some young *Gursikhs* got together to work out some programme for youngsters. With the initiative taken by Bhai Swaraj Singh, the young people started a programme of *Sikhi* workshop. The children have one ambition and that is to become linked with the Guru (i.e. to understand and adopt Guru's teachings); to get closer to Waheguru by reciting His Name (*Naam*). With this aim in mind, Bhai Harjit Singh, Bhai Rhupinder Singh and little children hold this workshop every Sunday. Their desire is that *Naam* should reside deep in the minds of little children and they say *Ardaas*, "O' Sataguru Ji! Be merciful towards your children. We are ignorant and forgetful. Show us your way and grant us the gift of *Naam simran*." Following the *Ardaas*, the children close their eyes and meditate on Waheguru *Mantar* (mystical formula) with alert minds. Children age 4 to 12 attend. Bhai Harjit Singh Ji wears full Sikhi *baana* (dress) so that the children are duly impressed by the Sikh dress and life style.

The children join together to recite the Mool Mantar. Bibi Jaswinder Kaur and Bibi Amardeep Kaur lead with the words and the children recite after them. Little children keep the beat with small metallic musical instruments. With Guru Ji's blessing this recitation goes on in this way for about one hour with a room full of children. Then Bhai Harjit Singh recites the stories of Baba Deep Singh, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and many other famous Sikh warriors. The children are very bright and some of them also recite historical stories. A six-year-old boy Simran Singh wears orange *Sikhi* dress and a blue cloth around his waste (*kamar kassa*). He too recites a *sakhi* (religious story: see Glossary) once in a while.

One day he recited the *sakhi* of Sajan Tthag. He spoke in a passionate clear voice, "Said Guru Nanak Dev Ji: Sajan! You are not a *sajan* (friend) but a *tthag* (swindler and a thug)!" All children listened with radiant faces. One feels cool and peaceful on seeing such scenes. Bhai Ranjodh Singh

and other colleagues together have painted a beautiful blue Khanda (double edged sword which is in the centre of the Sikh insignia) on the wall with great dedication. All face that way with folded hands for the concluding *Ardaas*. Gratitude is offered to Guru Ji. Towards the conclusion of the *Ardaas*, all children raise the Khalsa slogan of:

Deg Tegh Fateh

May Khalsa Langar and charity continue; and, victory be to the sword of the Khalsa.

Panth Ki Jeet

May the Panth be ever victorious

Raj Karega Khalsa

The Khalsa shall rule.

At such times, the unity of the children and their innermost desire for the rise of the Khalsa religion and Panth (as a religio - political global organisation) is clearly to be seen. Bhai Ranjodh Singh and Harminder Singh put up on the notice board, the English translation of the morning's main *Hukamnama* (*Mukh Vaak*) from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. In this way they help the children who cannot read Gurmukhi (Panjabi script) to understand the meaning of the *Hukamnama*. This is a praiseworthy *sewa*.

(B)

I attend the Singh Sabha Gurdwara from 10.00 to 11.00 in the morning for *simran*. Bhai Sukhdev Singh and Bibi Amarjit Kaur are off from work on Saturday. I requested them to attend *simran* and bring Simrat Singh with them.

When Bhai Sukhdev Singh comes to the Gurdwara he always says "GurFateh" to the Nishan Sahib (Khalsa flag in front of the Gurdwara). I was very pleased when he said "GurFateh" to the Nishan Sahib. I went and sat inside. Simrat also went inside, did *matha tekan* like grown ups, got the *Prasaad* and came and sat next to me. When we came out, Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji told me, "When we are at home together, he realises when we are going to the Gurdwara, and he starts saying "I want to go to Baba Ji's house." Then he holds out both his hands with palms upwards as if for receiving *Prasaad* at the Gurdwara and says, "I want *Prasaad* at the Gurdwara." He then brings and places our shoes in front of us and says, "Let us go"." I was very pleased to hear this.

In this way, everyone is pleased to see little children performing *matha tekan* with such devotion at the Gurdwara. Who knows how pleased Guru Ji is. Guru Ji is so charitable that he destroys all sins of earlier life cycles of the child. I pray to the Sangat to bring their children to the Gurdwara and make their birth, a success. If the parents do not bring their children along with them to the Gurdwara, then how would the children know anything about *Sikhi*. I asked Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji, "Do you know why we perform *matha tekan* to Nishan Sahib?" He replied, "It is the Nishan (symbol) of our religion, so we give it that form of respect." I told him, "For this Nishan, thousands of Singhs have sacrificed their lives. The *Shaheeds* (holy spirits of the martyr Singhs) guard the Nishan Sahib. Therefore, it is our duty to say *Gur Fateh* (Sikh salutation) before the Nishan Sahib. (Editor's personal note: Nishan Sahib, should one *matha tek* or say GurFateh? While it is the editor's desire to retain the main text in its original format, it needs to be understood from the Gurmatt aspect that the Sikh salutation of "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa; Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh" before the Nishan Sahib would be fully acceptable, *matha tekan* is strictly reserved for the GurShabad in

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji only. Therefore, *matha tekan* before the Nishan Sahib should be interpreted in this context.)

"You look after Simrat, so start him with regular *simran* of "Waheguru". I too started *simran* at a very early age." Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji asked, "Bhai Sahib Ji, he is so small, how can he do *simran*? I am not confident that he would do *simran*, for he does not understand anything." Bibi Amarjit Kaur said, "Why not? Bhagat Kabir Ji says:-

"Just as Dhroo and Prahlada meditated on the Lord, so should you meditate on the Lord, O my soul. || 1 || O Lord, Merciful to the meek, I have placed my faith in You; along with all my family, I have come aboard Your boat. || 1 || Pause || When it is pleasing to Him, then He inspires us to obey the Hukam of His Command. He causes this boat to cross over. || 2 || By Guru's Grace, such understanding is infused into me; my comings and goings in Reincarnation have ended. || 3 || Says Kabir, meditate upon the Sustainer of the earth. In this world, in the world beyond and everywhere, he alone is the Giver. || 4 || (SGGS p. 337)

Bhagats Dhru and Pralad also started reciting Naam at a very early age."

Bhai Sahib said, "I said, "I shall believe, if I hear with my own ears." After two or three weeks I went to Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji's place and Bibi Amarjit Kaur told me, "One day I was combing Simrat's hair and he said, "Oh! oh! *Taaee Ji....pain!*" I asked him, "Do your hair hurt?" He nodded to confirm. We have a picture of Bhai Taru Singh on the wall. I told Simrat, "Look! His head did not hurt even though his scalp was taken off. He did not feel pain because he did "Waheguru" *simran*. You say "Waheguru, Waheguru" and your head will not hurt either. Simrat started uttering "Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru...." in his sweet childish voice. I touched his hair very gently and asked him, "Does it hurt now?" He said, "No *Taaee Ji*." I told him, "Because you are saying "Waheguru, Waheguru" so your hair do not hurt. You should say "Waheguru, Waheguru".

"O God, Treasure of Mercy, please bless me, that I may sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord. I always place my hopes in You; O God, when will you take me in Your Embrace? || 1 || Pause || I am a foolish and ignorant child; Father, please teach me! Your child makes mistakes again and again, but still, You are pleased with him, O Father of the Universe. || 1 || Whatever You give me, O my Lord and Master, that is what I receive. There is no other place where I can go. || 2 || Those devotees who are pleasing to the Lord, the Lord is pleasing to them. Their light merges into the Light; the lights are merged and blended together. || 3 || The Lord Himself has shown mercy; He lovingly attunes me to Himself. Servant Nanak seeks the Sanctuary of the Door of the Lord, who protects his honor. || 4 ||" (SGGS p. 1321)

"Through Satguru Ji's blessing, Waheguru's Naam now resides in his mind and he keeps on reciting

"Waheguru, Waheguru

"One day we were all watching the video of Sri Hem Kunt Sahib. After seeing it, when we were going to switch off, he said, "I want to see more, do not switch off." We said, "OK. We will rewind it and put on again." He started crying and said, "Put on quickly." We put it on where it had stopped. When they recite "Waheguru, Waheguru, Sat Naam Sat Naam..." in the video, he also starts reciting. He likes that *Shabad* very much.

"He also likes the Shabad "*Waho waho Gobind Singh Ji, Aapay Gur Chela*" ("Wonderous Gobind Singh Ji, Himself the Guru and the Disciple"), and starts reciting it whenever he likes. When he feels he says "Waheguru, Satnam". One day he started chanting in his sweet voice:-
Waho waho Gobind Singh Ji Aapay Gur Chela Bajan Waalay Gobind Singh Ji.

("Wondrous Gobind Singh Ji, Himself the Guru and the Disciple The Lord of the Hawk, Gobind Singh Ji.")

"I was left wondering from where he heard "Bajan Waalay Gobind Singh Ji". It is only when I heard the original Shabad carefully that I understood that he had heard it in that."

Bhai Sukhdev Singh said, "Now I am convinced that a little child can do *simran*. He keeps watching this film (of Hemkunt Sahib) all day. He has learnt how to rewind the film and put it on again. No one can interfere and put on another film. No one else can watch any other programmes on the television. He carries such authority that no one can say anything to him. He does not allow the other children, Balwinder Singh and Jaswinder Singh to watch any programme. He wants to continue seeing "Waheguru, Waheguru.." film. He says, "Bha Ji, I want to watch "Waheguru, Waheguru" and sends them upstairs feeling upset. No one says anything to him because he keeps reciting "Waheguru" as he watches the video. If he goes to someone's house and a religious film is on, he wants to continue watching it. That is what happened one day. His mummy says that they went to someone's house and they had a kirtan video on. We started watching. After sometime they wanted to see another programme, but he said he wanted to continue seeing only the kirtan video. He would not allow them to switch it off. They too were surprised that this little child was listening to *kirtan* so intently.

One day Simrat came to the Gurdwara with Bhai Sukhdev Singh. Bhai Sahib started cleaning the shoes. Seeing his *Taaya Ji* (father's elder brother) cleaning shoes he wanted a piece of cloth to clean shoes. He imitates whatever the older people are doing. He wanted a piece of cloth immediately and started crying. Bhai Sahib said you will get a cloth only if you clean the shoes. He said, "Yes, I will." When given a piece of cloth he started cleaning shoes. If he is not taken to the Gurdwara, he takes everyone's shoes out, cleans them and puts them back.

(C)

One day I went to meet Harkirat Singh and Harjot Kaur in Birmingham. Harkirat's grandmother Darshan Kaur Ji said to him, "Show Baba Ji how you do *simran*." I was very pleased to see two and a half years old Harkirat doing *swas-swas simran* (see Glossary). Bibi Darshan Kaur told me, "Every Sunday we take him to Bebe Nanaki Gurdwara. He attracts everyone's affection and does not regard anyone as a stranger. One day, when we went to the Gurdwara, after *matha tekan* he went and sat in the lap of Bhai Harbhajan Singh Sagoo. At that time Bhai Sahib was doing *swas- swas simran*. Seeing Harkirat sitting in his lap, Bhai Sahib was very pleased and started whispering *swas-swas simran* in his ear. Harkirat also started doing *simran* in the same way."

I thought it surprising, that a two and half years old child was doing *swas-swas simran*. Only the *Panj Piaray* gives guidance for such *simran*. This child has not taken *Amrit*, but due to his past good deeds, *Naam* now resides in his mind. This child has one other quality, that if someone's head is bare while *Paatth* or *simran* is going on, he goes and covers that person's head. One day he came to our house and it was our wish that we should hear *simran* from him. I asked Harkirat Singh, "How does Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Sagoo do *simran*?" hearing this he started doing *swas-swas simran*. While he was reciting *simran*, he noticed that Bibi Dayal Kaur's head cloth had slipped back

on her head. He first went and covered her head then continued with the *simran*. His interest in *simran* is due to his grandmother. Whenever his grandmother recited the *Paatth* of Sukhmani, she would cover his head and asked him to sit near her. If all mothers ask their children to cover their heads then they will do this when they are older. Younger children copy the older children. As Harkirat does *simran*, so also does Eksimar. When Bibi Darshan Kaur teaches *Paatth*, then the younger one also recites it. Harkirat reads this Shabad:

(Ucha dar Babay Nanak da)

"High (much esteemed) is the door of Baba Nanak.

I heard the fame and came.

High is the door of Baba Nanak."

(D)

Once, in the form of a *Sangat* comprising myself, Bhai Satnam Singh, Bhai Jaspal Singh, Bhai Harbhajan Singh, Bibi Mandeep Kaur, and Bibi Manjit Kaur, we went to see the Gurdwaras of East Africa. While coming from Nairobi to Mombasa, we stayed at Makindu Gurdwara. This Gurdwara is on the road and there is a large *Sangat* on Sundays. While we were there about 25 children came with their families for the *darshan* (holy sight) of the Gurdwara.

It is my interest to always take something for children with me wherever I go. I had with me small *Khandas*, small booklets and other religious souvenirs. I spoke to Bhai Satnam Singh and suggested a *Gursikhi* workshop for the children. We asked the children's parents. They were pleased to hear this as their children would learn about *Sikhi*. All the children were called together. Bhai Satnam Singh asked the children, "Why do you regard Guru Nanak Dev Ji as the greatest Satguru (True Guru) Nanak?" The children fell silent.

Satnam Singh explained, "Guru Nanak Dev Ji regarded all religions as equal. He did not regard one religion as lower than the other. For this reason Guru Nanak is remembered with affection as the highest True Guru." He then asked, "What were the names of the younger two Sahibzaaday (Princes). Many children responded correctly: "Sahibzada Fateh Singh and Sahibzada Jorawar Singh".

Bhai Sahib said to the children, "The nine and seven years old, two younger children of Guru Gobind Singh Ji preferred to die than to give up their religion. They loved *Sikhi*" I said to the children, "Raise your hand if you know Panjabi." About half the children raised their hands. I said to them, "You should all learn Panjabi." And to their parents, "You should teach your children Panjabi and also the *Paatth* of *Mool Mantar*. Your children should be able to do Guru Granth Sahib Ji's *darshan* (i.e. be able to read)." To the older children, "You should learn the *Paatth* of Jap Ji Sahib." I distributed gifts of *Sikhi* souvenirs to all children.

(E)

A well attended *Gurmatt* camp is held in England during the summer holidays with about 250 to 300 children attending from England and Europe. *Gurmatt* is taught here and, also, children take part in sports. It is most surprising that five year old Harwinder Singh played very lively *gatka* (Sikh art of self defence) with a young Sikh. The *Sangat* was very pleased. I too was most pleasantly surprised to see such a demonstration of *gatka* skill from so young a person. I asked his father Uptej Singh (Teji), "How did he get interested in *Gatka*. He said, "When his mother was expecting him, she would listen to the *Paatth* of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's *Bani* of *Akal Ustat*. She would pray to Guru Ji for a child who would preach *Sikhi*. When he was two and a half years old, he would

himself put on and watch video films of *gatka* playing, and said he wanted to learn the art. He was so keen that he would get hold of a stick and would start swinging it around. Seeing his interest, I decided to teach him. When I used to go for teaching *gatka*, I would take him with me and he learnt very quickly. Seeing him play with such skill, the Gurdwara Committee wanted him to play at the *Nagar Kirtan*, so that other children would see him and develop an interest."

Didar Singh Nihang was the first person who started teaching *gatka* at the Singh Sabha Gurdwara. Prithipal Singh, Kulwant Singh, Harbans Singh and some other Sikhs used to go for training. Then Giani Pritam Singh started teaching. At the Nagar Kirtan, demonstration of *gatka* skills is very popular. These days Uptej Singh (Teji) teaches *gatka*. He is so keen that he himself went to India to learn the skills. Many people, including ladies and children, take part in his class. He has generated much interest amongst the children and young Sikhs.

The tradition of *gatka* was started from the days of Guru Ji's. The ancient Singhs would demonstrate their skills before the Guru and receive His appreciation. Prizes were given out. Gatka is played at the festival of Hola Mahala (at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab). The sport of *gatka* has become so popular, that Teji now goes to other countries to teach. His small son is two and a half years old and he is also very keen and keeps swinging around a stick.

My Memorable Raaen Subaaee

(*Raaen Subaaee* = all night continuous Gurbani kirtan)

The first ever *Raaen Subaaee* Kirtan of children was held on 25 December, 1996, at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Southall, in remembrance of the martyrdom of the younger Sahibzaaday (*Shotey Sahibzadey*) i.e. the two younger Princes of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

One day, I went to the office to hand in the donations from the early morning *Naam Simran*. At that time the General Secretary Harpal Singh Brar and the Head Granthi, Giani Shamsheer Singh were sitting there. I said, "You are teaching the children *kirtan*, Panjabi classes are also held. The committee is doing a good job. However, you should give the children free time to do *kirtan*. The secretary said, that time was being given to the children, and that they did *kirtan* every Sunday." I suggested that not sufficient time was being given. That all the children learning *kirtan* should have the opportunity to sing *kirtan* in *Sangat* so that their confidence increases. That the parents would be very happy to see their children singing from the Gurdwara stage.

I suggested, "Why shouldn't we hold a *Raaen Subaaee* programme?" The Secretary said, "Make a list of the names of the children and we will consider it further." Bibi Kulwant Kaur made a list of the children in the *Sikhi* workshop and handed it over. Giani Ji was very pleased that there were so many children who could do kirtan. He said, "You give us a fixed date and we shall announce it on the radio."

We agreed the date of 25th December. After the programme was fixed, many of those who got to know about it, asked me, "Can the children do *kirtan* all night?" All were suggesting that at least a few older Gurbani singers should be included. I said, "Have your faith in Guru Ji. For Satguru Ji Himself would give the energy and the enthusiasm to the children."

Before the *Raaen Subaaee*, groups of children carrying harmoniums and tablas, started arriving. One room was filled with these musical instruments. It looked as if someone had opened a shop of these instruments. Soon the stage was surrounded by children. It was a sight worth seeing. The children were so keen to sit as close to the stage as possible, so that their turn would come first. Many children had arrived dressed in full *raagi* (professional Gurbani singers) dress. The *Ardaas* for the start of the *Raaen Subaaee* was done by an eleven year old Jaspreet Singh with great devotion. All joined in with full concentration. Following the *Ardaas*, 14 year old Pavandeep Singh read the *Hukamnama* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The *Sangat* were very pleased and much impressed by the proceedings. The Darbar hall was full by this time. Before starting the *Raaen Subaaee*, five years old Simran Singh recited the story of Sajan Tthag in great spirit. The *kirtan* was started by very young children. Kulwant Kaur was the stage secretary. The children were so keen that they came to ask her from time to time when their turn was.

One *jatha* (group) would get up and the other would be ready to take its place. The names of many children were not in the list, but they were keen to take their turn to do *kirtan*. Some were so absorbed in *kirtan* that they would forget that their time was up. Kulwant Kaur was concerned that there were so many children and they should all get some time. She kept handing in small notes to those doing *kirtan*, that time was up, but some were so devoted to their *kirtan* that they would not even look at the clock. All the *Sangat* were enjoying the *kirtan*.

Some very small children, who could not do *kirtan*, nevertheless, sat with the older children who were singing on the stage, to get their attendance noted by the *Sangat*. In the same category were three years old Simrat Singh and six years old Talwinder Singh who ensured due note of their attendance by making an appearance on the stage. There were two khad-taals (wood pieces with loose metal rings for producing a metallic-beat) lying on the stage. Talwinder picked them up and started playing (These days, few can play some of these ancient instruments like large dholkis, mardangs, shainas, khad-taals, chimtaas, bells and ghungrus, which were played in unison with great impact, at massive Diwans in Punjab held by large sant groups singing Gurbani in the countryside. Instead, our raagis have settled for the western harmonium, and tabla which is a recent invention. String instruments common in the olden days, have almost disappeared from Gurdwara stages). I thought, "These two are sitting together and may cause a disturbance. One may lead the other into trouble, but both turned out to be wise and did not create any problem. Both started playing one khad-taal each. Doing such energetic exercise, Simrat felt hungry. He was so lost in his own thoughts that instead of his mummy, he went and sat in another lady's lap and asked for milk. That lady was surprised but very pleased and stroked him with affection. When he realised his mistake, he uttered, "Oh my God, not my mummy." He went to his *Taaee Ji* (father's elder brother's wife) who was sitting near and asked for milk. After drinking milk he was back on the stage.

The melodious Gurbani *kirtan* by young children went on all night and the *Sangat* enjoyed it very much. Many had come just for *matha tekan*, but hearing the *kirtan* sat down to listen. Many asked from where the children were learning kirtan. Many other children were impressed and resolved to learn *kirtan* so that they could take part in the next *Raaen Subaaee*, dressed in the same way as these children.

Many in the *Sangat* sat on all night for they did not feel like leaving. Many Singhs would ask their Singhanis (wives) to come away but the latter would say, "Let us hear the next Jatha and then we will go." And so in this way it was early morning. When at 4.00 in the morning, recitation of "Waheguru" started then all forgot about going home. One hour of *simran* passed so quickly. The *Ardaas* was done after *simran*. After the concluding *Ardaas*, the *Sangat* praised the programme. They had enjoyed the programme very much. The President, Himat Singh Sohi, distributed prizes to the children.

Many said from the *Sangat* that such special programmes should be organised for the children in future. There should be at least one *Raaen Subaaee* in a month. The children would be much encouraged to improve their *kirtan*. *Sangat* were full of praise for the organisers. The children who were unable to get time, asked when the next programme would be and requested that they should be given time first.

These children were sincere and simple; there was no jealousy in them or any greed. They were doing *kirtan* just to please the Guru. The very small children, although, they did not understand *Bani*, but when the chant of "waheguru" was being recited, they joined in loudly.

If a child goes and sits in own parents' lap they are so pleased and give the child so much affection; they are so proud of the child. In the same way these little children sat in the lap of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and sang His praises; how pleased Guru Ji must have been.

I shall never forget this *Raaen Subaaee* and the other which was organised by Giani Amolak Singh (in the mid sixties). These were great spiritual experiences.

This *Raaen Subaaee* by children had such an impact on certain individuals that their lives changed. One such person is Committee Member Balkar Singh Dhillon. Bhai Balkar Singh met me and said, "Seeing the children doing kirtan all night had a great effect on me. I thought, I have wasted my life. I should also make good use of my time. When the early morning *simran* started then I was in a state of bliss." He asked, "Let me know if I can do any *sewa*. If you want to have other programmes, let me know; I shall myself make all arrangements."

I have seen that this family attends *simran* daily. Bhai Sahib gives much support for the *Sikhi* workshop for children. The lives of many children are changing. Little children are doing katha, *kirtan* and *simran*.

Gurmatt Discussion

(Some of my replies to questions asked by Gursikhs from time to time.)

(A)

One day Bhai Sukhdev Singh and I were discussing Gurmatt topics and he asked me, "Bhai Sahib Ji, how can one quickly reach the spiritual stage, so that Waheguru resides in one's mind and salvation is achieved?"

I explained, "It takes the effort of many life times to reach this stage. After taking many births there comes a time when, through the grace of Waheguru, this stage is achieved. There is a need for a lot of *simran*."

Bhai Sukhdev Singh, "Bhai Sahib Ji, what should one do in this life?"

I said, " To meet Waheguru, one has to give up three things: "Rise at Amrit vela (early in the morning) and contemplate on the praise of Waheguru." (Jap Ji Sahib: SGGS p. 2)

"These three things one must give up are: early morning sleep; another's wealth and another's body (i.e. extra-marital relations)."

"If one follows these principles, attends Guru Ji regularly and does *simran* early in the morning, then Guru Ji helps such a person. If one is unable to get up then Guru Ji sends *Shaheed* Singhs to wake a Sikh up. When the *Shaheed* Singhs come to wake up a Sikh, from that day his mind gets totally immersed in *simran*. When a *Gursikh* reaches this stage, then Waheguru is very close to him and saves him from the three things mentioned above. These are the first three steps to reach Waheguru. The one who passes these three steps reaches the fourth. Then Waheguru Ji shows many *kautaks* (unusual experiences) to such an individual. In this stage the physical body remains here and the ethereal body escapes through the *dasam duar* (tenth gate - see Glossary) to see numerous phenomena of nature and then returns into the physical body again. When the soul returns to the body, then the chant of Waheguru starts in the body in such a way that it is difficult to stop it. If a person reaches this stage then it is important to beware of *haumai* (ego-centricity or arrogance).

"When I started *simran*, Waheguru made me experience many unusual phenomena. Many Gursikhs reach this stage, but cannot remain unaffected and humble. They tell others and the word spreads. Waheguru Ji is not happy when this happens. It takes a great deal of effort to reach this stage again.

"Indulgence in useless dramatic exhibition of magic, (From such practices) Godly people (refrain because they) are ashamed (to compete with God)."
(*Bachittar Natak* Patshahi 10)

If Waheguru has blessed someone then one should not tell others. The same happened with me at the beginning; I would see *kautaks* and tell others about them. This was a great loss to me. Then it would take me many months of *simran* to reach that stage again. If you tell people then you cannot make further progress.

Once Giani Amolak Singh Ji advised me, that just as someone who has wealth, will not talk about his bank balance; not even to his own family, so *Naam* is real wealth, the more silent you remain about it, the better. After that I did not talk to others about my spiritual experiences.

(B)

Bhai Sukhdev Singh: "Bhai Sahib Ji, what are the things which interfere with the path of *bhagti* (meditation on God's Name)?" I replied:-

Firstly, Gursikhs must have complete faith in the Guru. When doing *simran*, a Gursikh should regard the Guru as ever present with him.

"My Guru is always with me, near at hand. Meditating, meditating in remembrance on Him, I cherish Him forever." (SGGS P. 394)

A Gursikh's mental make-up should be so disciplined that he or she should remain even tempered (unaffected) by pain or happiness. *Simran* should be done with such conviction as if it is being recited to Guru Ji, Who is sitting right in front of the Gursikh. Some Gursikhs take *Amrit* but fail the first test set by Guru Ji. If they experience any sorrow they start complaining to Guru Ji. They do not have total faith in Guru Ji. Any good or bad life experience should be regarded as the Will (*Hukam*) of the Guru. The Will of Guru Ji should be accepted in total faith and gratefully (Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's life is like a light-house regarding acceptance of Waheguru's Will (*Bhana*). He, gratefully, regarded the "loss" of his four sons as the safe return of what had been entrusted to him by Waheguru Ji. His *Ardaas* at the time, was an *Ardaas* of thankfulness! That is Guru Ji's guidance by example, for us regarding acceptance of sorrow or pain as Waheguru's *Hukam*). Pray to Guru Ji:-

"Satguru Ji, please spare us any trials (tests); we are not strong and may waver. Give us the strength to accept *Bhana* (Your Will)"

Simran erases all bad deeds of past lives and this life. When they have been totally eradicated, one starts enjoying a state of bliss in *simran* (due to a clear conscience through repentance, humility and *sewa*). As Guru Ji says:-

"But when the intellect is stained and polluted by sin, it can only be cleansed by the Love of the Name." (SGGS p. 4)

It is only through *simran* that dirt of sins is washed away from the mind.

"The mind of the faithless cynic is like a crazy elephant. It wanders around the forest, distracted by attachment to *Maya* (see Glossary)." (SGGS p. 415)

Guru Ji says, that caught in the vicious cycle of *maaya* (worldly attachment and craving for more - see Glossary), the mind is charging around like a mad elephant. It is important to control this mind. It is also important to take *Khanday Baatay da Amrit* (Ambrosial Water (*Amrit*) of the double edged sword (*khanda*) and the iron bowl (*bata*) and accept the Guru's *Hukam* (Will and Order). One should follow the orders of the Panj Piaray given during the *Amrit Sanchaar* ceremony, to get up early in the morning and to recite the *Five Banis* (see Glossary). The *Amrit vela* starts at 1.00am in the early morning (One and a quarter *pehar* before dawn. A *pehar* is three hours, (see Glossary)). At first, sleep will trouble the devotee; the cure for that is to sprinkle the eyes with cold

water, or do simran aloud. It takes some years to overcome the problem of sleep. It took me 15 to 20 years.

Secondly, the mind will wander while doing *Simran* (*Furna* (with hard "r", are dream-like thought flashes in the mind. They may be in the nature of *sankallap* (good) or *vikallap* (bad). The *furna* need to be overcome through *Naam simran*). When some thoughts begin to trouble the mind then start a loud chant of "Waheguru, Waheguru" to bring the mind back to *simran*. When *Naam* resides in the *swas* (each life breath), then thought concentration is achieved. The tongue also stops and nothing is heard by the ears. The soul is enjoying the bliss of *Naam* (The God's Being or Holy Presence). The body becomes light. Much *simran* is needed to reach this stage.

It took me 15 to 20 years to reach this stage. That is my experience. Some Gursikhs expect this stage immediately on taking *Amrit*. Many unusual experiences are felt when doing *simran*, but it takes a long time to start enjoying the true bliss of *Naam* (feeling at one with the Divine Being).

Thirdly, the five evil influences, lust (uncontrolled sexual desire), anger, greed, attachment and self-centred conceit (ego) trouble the mind. Lust troubles most. It poses a great challenge and it is very difficult to free oneself from this basic human instinct. I too have suffered from it for many years. At times my mind became very unsteady and troubled me. I would keep thinking, "I do *simran*, I get up early in the morning, but why do these thoughts and dreams trouble me so. Sometimes, I became depressed and would begin to doubt this path of *bhagti* (meditation on and devotion for Waheguru's *Naam*) in great distress, I would pray to Waheguru Ji to free me from the bad dreams. When I became very distressed then a, *achint Shaheed* Singh (appearance of a martyr Singh outside my thoughts) would console and encourage me and ask me to rise for *Naam simran*. Then I would take heart again and felt the presence of Satguru with me. I have noticed that these days almost everyone is caught up in *maaya's* (see Glossary) net in the form of female attraction. Whatever true wealth (of *Naam*) they save, is looted by the Five bandits (the Five evils mentioned above). The spiritual credit of *Naam simran* - the true wealth - is lost.

(C)

Once a Gursikh asked me the meaning of subtle (or unseen) *haumai* (ego, also see Glossary).

I explained that people do not recognise the unseen *haumai*. After doing research of *Bani* I understood that *sewa*, *simran*, humility and charity (doing good deeds for others) are the four pillars of *Sikhi*. If the four supports of a bed get infected by woodworm, they become weak from the inside. The effect of unseen *haumai* is like that. The symptoms are: to be jealous of someone; to condemn others and to gossip about others; to feel happy listening to own praise; and, to think bad about others. In this way the unseen *haumai* affects a person from the inside. The victim does not realise this until that person misses the main objective of life. This *haumai* is most dangerous.

"Whoever I see is diseased. Only my True Guru, the True Yogi, is free of disease." (SGGS p. 1140)

Only the Satguru is without *haumai*.

"Naam is the medicine for all types of disease." (Sukhmani: GGS p. 274)

There is only one way to save yourself from this disease of unseen *haumai* and that is through continuous *Naam simran*; do this as long as you can and say and pray to Waheguru Ji.

"I run around in all directions, searching for the love of God. The five evil enemies' are tormenting me; how can I destroy them? (Guru's response:) Shoot them with the sharp arrows of meditation on the Name of God. O Lord! The way to slaughter these terrible sadistic enemies is obtained from the Perfect Guru." (SGGS p. 1363)

In this Shabad, Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji is praying to Waheguru Ji, "My desire is to recite Your Name, but the Five (lust and anger etc.) are so powerful that they prevent me from doing this."
Waheguru Ji replied,

"To control these (evils) and to free yourself from these, shoot the sharp arrows of *Naam*."

A person should not give up in disappointment. Satguru Ji comes to the rescue at times to ensure that a person does not waver. At times one hears *kirtan* and sometimes feels as if one is in the presence of Guru Ji. The mind experiences these positive aspects of *Gursikhi* and becomes steady again. Sometimes, one becomes proud about doing *simran*. Thus, this subtle form of *haumai* pollutes the mind, for you cannot have two swords in the same sheath. So where there is *haumai*, *Naam* cannot reside there. To get rid of *haumai*, one should go to the Gurdwara and do *sewa* (service in humility) of cleaning Sangat's footwear.

(D)

I am asked sometimes:

"Bhai Sahib Ji, what is the difference between doing *simran* at home and doing *simran* in *Sangat* at the Gurdwara?"

I explain: One has to make a special effort to go to the Gurdwara. If a person walks to the Gurdwara, his feet are purified. Those who go in a car, also spend their time usefully. If one decides to go to the Gurdwara, but is unable to attend, in the Age of Kalyug, even that intention is rewarded because the intention was good. When a person goes to the Gurdwara then the dust of the feet of Sangat touches one's forehead. The spiritual fruit of cleaning Sangat's shoes early in the morning is great. Eyes are purified by Guru Ji's *darshan* (holy sight) early in the morning. The tongue is purified by *simran*. The resonance of *Naam simran* by the *Saadh Sangat* increases the effect of *simran* many times. If one hundred Gursikhs are doing *simran* the impact on the soul, and, therefore, the benefit, will be multiplied one hundred times. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji has given the *Sangat* the highest status. If one does *Naam simran* in the presence of Guru Ji in the morning then the sins of many previous life cycles are washed away.

"The bumble bee is greedy for the flower's fragrance; finding it, it traps himself in the flower. Just so, the humble Saints love the Lord; beholding the Blessed Vision of His *Darshan*, they are satisfied and satiated." (SGGS p. 708)

An insect loves the fragrance of flowers but meets its death in the bosom of the flower. However, look at the praise of the Guru, that a Gursikh sitting in His lap (presence) becomes immortal (i.e. is freed from the cycles of birth and death). Many people prefer to sit at home to do *simran* with own family. In that way they can redeem their own family only but cannot help others. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji could have done the same, but His main aim was to connect every human being to the Guru's *Charan* (holy feet of the Guru, symbolic of concentration on Guru's *Shabad* in total humility). The people redeemed by Guru Ji included such sinners as Sajan Tthag, Kauda Rakhsh, Vali Kandhari and many such evil doers. Guru Ji went to these people to redeem them. If we, the

Sikhs of Guru Nanak sit aloof like yogis, then what is the difference between us and the monastic yogis.

(E)

"Bhai Sahib Ji, is it important to live the life of a householder?"

"Yes, if an individual is seeking salvation then the family life is important. If one attempts to do meditation without being married, then the mind will remain unstable. This is the Age of *Kalyug* and the unstable mind continuously runs towards worldly attractions and wasteful life style. It takes many years of *simran* to stabilise the wandering mind. Even then lust is a great evil force and will continue to trouble the mind. Most of the great *avatars* (saints and prophets) who came to this world, were married. Of the Ten Gurus nine were married (Sri Har Krishan Ji's Light merged with Waheguru Ji when He was only 8 years old). Sri Ram Chandar Ji, Bhagwan Krishan, Shiv Ji, Mahatma Budh, Brahma and Muhammed Sahib, they all had families. So, it is important to get married. Akal Purakh (Waheguru) established all creation in two parts, for example, man/woman; night/day; birth/death; youth/old age; sunlight/darkness; earth/sky and sorrow/happiness etc. Akal Purakh has established this meaningful system. The day is for working and the night is for resting. Married life is for procreation, so that life may continue. Those *saadhus* and *satits* who say that one should not get married are breaking the Divine Law. However, there are other great saints who did not get married because they were sent for preaching religion; they have been sent by Guru Ji Himself. Examples of such holy people are: Sant Baba Atar Singh Ji Mastuanay-waalay, Sant Baba Karam Singh Ji Hoti Mardan, Sant Baba Jwala Singh Ji Harkhowal, Sant Baba Gurmukh Singh Ji Patialay-waalay, Sant Baba Isher Singh Ji Rare-waalay, Sant Baba Bhan Singh Jagraon, Sant Baba Nand Singh Ji Kaleran-waalay and many others; no one can equal their saintliness. They would recite *Bani* all night and do *simran*.

It is my own experience how troublesome lust (sexual urge) can be when one engages in Waheguru meditation. I too spent life as a family man for five or six years. I used medicine too to control this distracting force. From the day I was blessed by Guru Ji's *darshan*, my mind did not waver. This was a gift of *Naam*. My life changed. For controlling this distracting influence, it is necessary to do *simran* for 10 to 12 hours a day. Then a stage is reached where lust cannot trouble a devotee. Some *Gursikhs* ask me, "Being family people, how can we do so many hours of *simran*?" The way this can be done is that if two members of a family sit together to do *Paatths* of Nit Nem and Sukhmani and *simran*, then it becomes a Sangat and the reward doubles. In the same way while doing daily chores one should keep reciting all the *Bani* one knows by heart. Proceeding in this way, with Guru Ji's blessing, one achieves spiritual success while living a normal family life."

(F)

"Bhai Sahib Ji, tell us something about cult and yogic powers." (Mental or supernatural powers developed through austerities.)

(Editorial note: The central theme of Gurbani is to control the aimless wandering of the mind which harms both, worldly and spiritual objectives of this life. Whether some experiences described by Bhai Sahib Ji can be explained logically or (psychologically) is to miss the point. Regrettably, the modern (clever and arrogant) mind will insist on scientific/logical explanations; but then Gurbani says that everything is within His Will and everything can (ultimately) be explained once His Will (Hukam or Order of Scheme of Things) is understood. The *Gursikhi* stress in this life is on continual and continuous mind-focus on *Naam*. The Omnipresent, Omniscient and All Pervading Presence of The Ultimate Reality, "Waheguru", the One and Only Mystical Formula

(Mantar) for a Gursikh. No power is "supernatural" and no power is greater than the All Powerful Positive One (Ik) Creator (*Oangkaar*)).

Any Gursikh who does *simran* early in the morning (*Amrit Vela*), earns the credit of Guru's *Shabad*, he or she certainly acquires spiritual powers (which cannot be explained by worldly science). The first indications of these are through dreams when one sees unusual sights and get some advance knowledge of a future event. For example, one gets to know beforehand of some sad or happy event in the family. If one wants to go and see someone, one knows beforehand if that person is likely to be at home. This has happened with me on occasions. At the next stage many *kautaks* (unusual happenings) take place and one is not left in any doubt. If a Gursikh, who does regular Nit Nem does not get up in time, the *Shaheed* Singhs encourage the Gursikh to rise and do Nit Nem. Then Guru Ji makes one experience other *kautaks*. When a Gursikh is awake and alert, he suddenly starts doing the *Paatth* of Mool Mantar, *Gurmantar* ("Waheguru") or Sukhmani. One experiences a strange pleasant sensation at such a time. Sometimes one is witness, in a dream, to the *Prakaash* of Guru Ji; the *Sangat* is there and one can hear *kirtan*. Ordinary people acquire spiritual powers. However, Gursikhs, after taking *Amrit* should control such powers. One should not gain worldly benefit from such spiritual powers. One should pray to Guru Ji in order to aspire to the next stage by controlling, and not misusing or announcing such spiritual achievements. Boasting to others about such powers detracts from the spiritual attainment and a great deal more effort is required to reach the same stage.

A Gursikh should remember the Guru's Order. You can impress people with spiritual powers, but suffer a great loss in the wealth of *Naam*, and you would be turning away from the Guru. It is the Guru's Order that Gursikhs must not use cult powers. They should rise high above these and attain salvation during this lifetime.

Once I decided to go to India. I was staying at Bhai Amrik Singh's house at that time. Bhai Sahib said, "As you are going to India, do go and see Bhai Bhan Singh Ji. He is a true *Braham-giani* (one who knows all by being at one with The One - see Glossary). I went to Bhai Amnk Singh's village and told his brother, "I would like to do *darshan* of Baba Bhan Singh Ji."

We both started off for Baba Ji's *darshan*. As we were travelling in the bus, Bhai Amrik Singh's brother told me, "One day Baba Ji said to the *Sangat* that his time to go to *Sach Khand* was near." *Braham-gianis* know about such things beforehand. Baba Ji wanted to know the views of the *Sangat*. The *Sangat* asked, "Baba Ji, if you go to *Sach Khand*, who would you appoint in your place? If someone is appointed, the *sewa* and *simran* will continue." Hearing this, Baba Ji fell silent. There were two *sewadars* doing *sewa* at Baba Ji's *dera* (establishment) for many years. Baba Ji decided to make one of them the main *sewadar*. He decided to test both. The one who had started doing *sewa* first, had acquired certain powers from Baba Ji. He became too arrogant, got upset with Baba Ji and went and settled in another village. He started using his powers there and the villagers were impressed. They started looking after him. However, after a few days, whatever he tried to do with his powers, the opposite would happen. He lost face. No one bothered about him and stopped serving him food even. He returned to Baba Ji, who smiled and said, "You have come back empty", meaning, he had lost all that he had earned spiritually. The second *sewadar* was humble and never displayed his spiritual powers. Baba Ji decided to appoint him in his own place.

I was very pleased to do *darshan* of Baba Ji and we discussed *Gurmatt*. One who goes beyond yogic displays of power will get closer to Waheguru Ji. This is the first sign that one is on the right path to meeting Waheguru Ji.

My Beautiful Dream

Khalsa Raj

After five or six months of doing *simran* with the *Sangat* at the Gurdwara, in a dream one day, I reached Sri Harmandar Sahib. Sri Harmandar Sahib was decorated with white, red, blue, green and orange diamonds. I wanted to continue seeing it. I cannot describe the splendour of the scene before me. The building was studded with such shining stones, that their light was many times more than ordinary electric bulbs. Yet it was not glaring but soothing. They were not hot like bulbs. At that time there was a slight drizzle and I thought that my clothes were wet; but when I touched them they were dry. I bowed before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, did *matha tekan* and sat down. The *raagi* Singhs were doing *kirtan* of this *Shabad*:

"The Supreme Lord God, through the Divine Guru, has Himself protected and preserved His children. Celestial peace, tranquillity and bliss have come to pass; my service has been perfect. || 1 || Pause || God Himself has heard the prayers of His humble devotees. He dispelled my disease, and rejuvenated me; His glorious radiance is so great! || 1 || He has forgiven me for my sins, and interceded with His power. I have been blessed with the fruits of my mind's desires; Nanak is a sacrifice to Him. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 819)

I became so immersed in *kirtan* that my only desire was to keep listening. On completion of the *Shabad*, I realised that I had come to see Khalsa Raj. I got up and went to see Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. Akal Takhat is such an Immortal Throne of Spiritual and Worldly Sovereignty, that there Truth reigns and truth is the final outcome.

"There, only the Truth is judged true; the sinners are picked out and separated." (SGGS p. 463)

"True in the Primal beginning, True throughout the ages. True here and now. O Nanak, forever and ever True." (SGGS p. 1)

The Panj Piaray were doing *simran* at Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. I announced GurFateh "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh." When they replied, it seemed to me that the resonance of the GurFateh was coming from the whole of Des Panjab. After *darshan* of the *Panj Piaray*, I was in a state of bliss. I felt as if I was doing *darshan* of my Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji through the *Panj Piaray*.

"Khalsa is in my image.
In Khalsa do I reside."
(*Sarah Loh Granth*)

I can never forget this scene all my life. They said, "Have you come to see Khalsa Raj?" I confirmed asking them to help me. Then I had a conversation with them. They sent a Khalsa Singh with me. First of all he took me into an underground tunnel-like cavity. As I stepped in, a melodious chant of "Waheguru" started and I was so emotionally struck that my eyes flooded with tears. I could not contain myself. These were tears of bliss and happiness. I did not have the courage to step further. From where I was standing, I bowed to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and sat down.

The throne of Guru Ji was decorated many times more resplendently than the most majestic Thrones of the ancient Maharajas. The gold *Palaki* (structure on which Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is

placed) was studded with many varieties of diamonds and rubies; the glitter of which had a charming effect on the mind. The overhead *Chanani* too was covered with star shapes and pearls ("Decorative square piece of cloth hung overhead, above Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as a symbol of royalty). I was left completely amazed. The Gursikhs sitting in this massive underground place were doing *simran* of Waheguru to the accompaniment of a large variety of natural musical sounds. There was divine bliss in these sounds and I became completely absorbed in them.

"The Sound-current of the *Naad* (octave) vibrates there, and countless musicians play on all sorts of instruments there. So many *raags* (musical "moods" of the Indian musical system), so many musicians singing there." (SGGS p. 6)

I was not conscious of myself and my concentration was totally in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. *Darshan* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji made me feel that Waheguru Ji, *Akal Purakh* (the Timeless Being), was present right in front of me. From the *Prakaash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, rays of soothing light were radiating on the Gursikhs.

"Light radiates from the place where sits the Holy Congregation (*Saadh Sangat*)" (Bhai Gurdas Ji)

In the radiance, I saw the image of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Guru Ji spoke, "My blessing will be on any Gursikh who does Waheguru *simran*." Hearing this, I saw before my eyes a war scene in which Mata Sahib Kaur Ji asked, "I can see all Singhs but not the *Sahibzaday* (Princes of Guru Ji)." Guru Ji waved towards the Khalsa and said, "Why lament the death of the Four, thousands are alive. Due to the sacrifice of the Four *Sahibzaday*, thousands of Gursikhs who do *simran* have been born." Guru Ji prayed to Akal Purakh, "I promised that thousands of Singh's will do *simran*, but today, with Your Blessing, hundreds of thousands are doing *simran*."

The Khalsa Ji who was with me said, "Singh Ji! Be alert!" After the completion of *simran*, most Singhs got up and left, but about 15 to 20 remained deep in *simran*. I asked Khalsa Ji, "All others have gone, why are these still in meditation?"

Khalsa Ji replied, "They have gone to see the fantastic sights of *Sach Khand*. They have left their physical bodies and their ethereal bodies have flown through *dasam duar* (tenth gate) to *Sach Khand*. Some, for two days, some for four and others for a longer time. They go for *darshan* of *Akal Purakh* (the Timeless Being i.e. God) and return. To see *Sach Khand* it is necessary to do continuous *simran*."

Khalsa Ji told me that at 2.30 in the morning, five Singhs do the *Prakaash* of Guru Ji in the underground chamber. The *Prakaash* is located at the same place at the beginning of the tunnel at Sri Amritsar Sahib. The early morning (*Amrit vela*) *Mukh-Vaak* - Main Order - is heard by all *Sangat* on speakers. All the *Sangat* heed and act according to this *Vaak*. Three o' clock *swas-swas simran* starts. From 4.00 to 5.00 a.m. *Waheguru simran* is done with musical instruments. After the completion of *simran*, the *Sangat* goes to the Gurdwara to do Nit Nem followed by *langar* and return to their homes.

After this, Khalsa Ji took me to the Gurdwara. I was amazed to see such a beautiful Gurdwara. It was built of stone more beautiful than marble. I went inside and performed *matha tekan*. The *Palaki* (on which Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is placed) was decorated with many coloured glass. The overhead *Chanani* cloth was decorated with star shapes, rubies and pearls. Two Anand Karaj

ceremonies were taking place in the Gurdwara. The only difference was that one Panjabi Singh was being married to a white Singhani, while a white Singh was being married to a Panjabi Singhani. There was a lot of Sangat here from the two villages of the brides and the grooms to bless the marriages. They all seemed to have great regard for each other. The *Panj Piaray* from both villages were also present. *Gurbani Kirtan* was going on and it was so sweet that one did not feel like leaving. The ceremony was simple and in complete accord with *Gurmatt*. There was no question of any dowry being given.

I asked Khalsa Ji, "What is the meaning of these mixed marriages?" Khalsa Ji said, "In order to eradicate any colour distinctions, such marriages are taking place. Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji is all knowing. Guru Ji is creating such a Khalsa who remain staunch in their belief. The people of Panjab do not have total faith in the Guru. White Singhs will remain faithful and will not turn their backs on the Guru. They will be fit to run the Khalsa Raj because in them there is no discrimination between high and low. They will practise the Words of Guru Ji.

"It is noticed, that after taking Amrit, the White Singhs keep their *rehat*. In this way in one or two generations the complexion of the Khalsa would be the same. Differences and the caste system would be eradicated."

After the Anand Karaj the Sangat went to *langar shakan* (eating food in the *Langar*). The *langar* had been made in iron utensils and was very tasty.

I asked, "How is the *langar* (food in the *Langar*) prepared for so many *Sangat*?"

Khalsa Ji told me, "Food items for the *Langar* are prepared in the food factory and sent to the Gurdwara. In this way peeling potatoes, cutting vegetables, grounding flour (*atta*), preparing yogurt etc., all this is done quite quickly. Recipes for everything are ready regarding ingredients like salt, pepper and masala etc. and all food is prepared by machines, and washing etc. is all done by machines. There are special machines for making *prasaaday* (*rotis*) as well. And so *langar* is prepared quickly for hundreds of thousands of *Sangat*."

I was able to see some of the food preparations and was amazed at the efficiency and the automation used.

After eating *langar*, people from the two villages were seen strolling in a park and the atmosphere and social niceties were like a happy fare. All seemed healthy and happy and very friendly towards each other.

Khalsa Ji told me, "The tunnel extends from Sri Amritsar to Delhi and there are settlements (villages or townships) on both sides.

About a hundred thousand people live in each settlement. The affairs of each settlement are run by *Panj Piaray*. Each settlement has a Gurdwara and a food factory. The *langar* of all is cooked in the Gurdwara. All eat at the Gurdwara and a deduction is made from each person's pay. Everyone must work for at least four hours. Ladies also work for four hours. There are parks on both sides of the tunnel. There are beautiful special parks for children. There are many grounds for playing sports."

I noticed green grass lawns, as if green carpets had been laid out. There was nice smelling perfume coming from the flowers and it smelt like none other on this earth. There were many varieties of flowers.

Then Khalsa Ji took me to see a hospital. It was beautifully designed and very clean. It was many storeys high. There were large beds in the rooms but they were empty. There were machines for doing all sorts of checking of illnesses. I was surprised and remarked, "But there are no patients here."

Khalsa Ji said, "The medicine for all illnesses is Naam (Sukhmani Sahib)"

"All the Khalsa here, get up in the morning and do Naam simran. For this reason they do not fall ill. Due to the power of simran they are not worried about anything. The average life of a Khalsa is 150 years and after that they achieve salvation."

I was then taken to a shopping centre, there were many large shops but no one appeared to be running them. I asked about this. Khalsa Ji took me to the gate. He said, "All things in the shops are uniformly priced. You make the payment in advance for all the things you wish to buy and the payment is put into a machine. The gate opens. The weight of the person entering is automatically measured. There are other machines inside and you can buy further items etc. The control is through weight measurement of in-coming people, and outgoing people with their goods. The machines can detect dishonesty, the fines for which are heavy (ten times the value of the goods stolen)."

Cow Centre

"You save the beasts, demons and fools, and even stones are carried across. Slave Nanak seeks Your Sanctuary; he is forever and ever a sacrifice to You." (SGGS p. 802)

Khalsa Ji took me to an animal form and told me that arrangements had been made for the salvation of animals. He said, "The *simran* in the morning can be heard by them through speakers. There is no shortage of milk and butter. The cows are brought in from other countries. A special place has been made for the cows, and there are employees who look after them. There is a special tunnel through which the cows can come and go. There are automatic fountains for the cows. As the cows step in, these fountains switch on; a little further, a current of warm air dries them. Much attention is given to cleanliness. There is a special train for the cows to be taken out to the countryside for grazing. They are brought back by train in the evening. They wash as in the morning and are given their fodder. They remain happy and give a lot of milk."

I reflected that in India today thousands are starving, but in Khalsa Raj, even the animals will be well looked after and will not go hungry.

O' human being! If animals can get human life by listening to *Naam*, why do you not recite Naam and achieve salvation.

Having shown all this, Khalsa Ji took me in a special vehicle to show me the motorway. It was very wide. Both sides were lined by colourful roses. For example, for one mile white flowers, then for the next mile red flowers and so on. They made the air fragrant. There were stones in the middle of the motorway painted in the same colour as the flowers. There was no need for any lighting as

the stones radiated light. After every 25 to 30 miles there were beautiful stopping places for eating food which was free. Khalsa Ji said that there were free travel passes for the elderly people.

Khalsa Ji said, "There will be one rule in Khalsa Raj. When a child is born it will get child allowance (Editor's note: In Bhai Rama Singh Ji's account there is a change in the tense, in that Khalsa Ji sometimes speaks in the present tense and sometimes in the future. This dream like experience is happening, yet it is also a prediction of what is going to happen in the future. The reader needs to understand this when reading this interesting experience). But this allowance will not be retained by the parents but by the Khalsa. When children grow up, then the expenses of marriage, house and car will be given by the Khalsa. Any shortfall will be made up by the Khalsa. Before they commence work, they will be given six months holidays for travelling abroad. Their holiday travel expenses will be paid by the Khalsa (administration). On return they will take up the jobs allocated to them by the Khalsa. Free flying lessons will be given to Gursikh children."

I asked, "How would the shortage of electricity and water be resolved?"

Khalsa Ji, "When the Khalsa Raj spreads to the whole of India, then Khalsa will make arrangements for water and electricity. For example, floods come in Bangladesh and water cannot be controlled, and there is great loss of life and property. To overcome this, Khalsa will construct a dam and supply water to the whole of India. In this way, this area will be saved from floods and the shortage of water and electricity will be overcome."

I asked, "How would 960 million people be initiated into the Order of the Khalsa?"

Khalsa Ji, "When Guru Nanak Dev Ji's spiritual Light merged with the Universal Light, the Hindus claimed he was their Guru and wanted to cremate his body; and the Muslims claimed him to be their *Pir* (religious leader) and wanted to bury his body. When the sheet covering Guru Ji's body was lifted, only a heap of flowers were found underneath. The Hindus and the Muslims divided the sheet in two and took one half each.

"I dye myself in the colour of the Lord, and sew what has to be sewn. Without the Lord's Name, I cannot live, even for a moment." (SGGS p. 485)

"Science has proven that the Gurbani uttered by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji five hundred years ago, has spread in the global atmosphere. Wherever there are Gurdwaras, *Bani* is being read. Through the resonance of that, the world is continually being saved; otherwise by now, the nature of *Kalyug* (which is fire) would have burnt and destroyed everyone. As Guru Nanak Dev Ji says in Asa di Vaar: "In the Age of Sat Yug, contentment was the chariot and righteousness the charioteer. In the Age of Treta Yug, celibacy was the chariot and power the charioteer. In the Age of Duapar Yug, penance was the chariot and truth the charioteer. In the Age of Kalyug, fire is the chariot and falsehood the charioteer." (SGGS p. 470) (See also 'Tug' in the Glossary.)

"Meaning that the nature of the *Age of Kalyug*, being the vehicle of fire, is hot and the Name of Waheguru is cool and soothing for the soul. For this reason, contentment is achieved through *Naam simran*.

"The chant of *Naam* which resounds through the "tunnel" (Amritsar to Delhi) will have its spiritual effect. Through the power of *Naam Bani* (utterance of *Naam*) all those who hear will start *Naam simran*. All will join the Khalsa Panth when they realise that the Sikh faith is the faith of truth. In

this way the two halves of Guru Nanak's "covering sheet" will be sewn together again (The sheet referred to above which was covering Guru Nanak Dev Ji's body and which was then torn into two halves by the Hindus and the Muslims. (Editor's note: The coming together of the two parts is a beautiful revelation and human aspiration!)).

"The Baba (Guru Nanak Dev Ji) is venerated in every home, the difference between the Hindu and the Muslim has been lost (forgotten)" (Bhai Gurdas: *Vaar* 1.34)

"The map of India will change in Khalsa raj. This is the land of the Akal Purakh. Those who love God will take birth. The unbelievers, through their own sins will be destroyed. The new generation will understand truth.

"In large cities of foreign countries, like New York, London, Khalsa centres will be built. All those in need will be helped there. They will be looked after and supplied with food and clothes, free of charge.

"Khalsa would educate girls not to commit the sin of undergoing abortions. These are the girls who are not in a position to bring up children for economic or other reasons. Instead, Khalsa will look after unwanted children until they are mature. In this way, mothers and children would be attracted to Sikhi. They would develop deep links with the Sikh nation. Some of them would adopt *Sikhi* and marry into Sikh families in Panjab.

"And so *Sikhi* will spread to a Khalsa population of 960 million."

I asked, "When negotiating or holding talks with other countries, who would lead?"

Khalsa Ji, "*Panj Piaray* from Akal Takhat will take the lead in any talks."

I asked, "Would the same *Panj Piaray* continue to hold that position?"

Khalsa Ji, "Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was all-knowing. Guru Ji will so guide people's behaviour, that no one would have any self-centred ambition to hold high positions. Whoever wishes to be included will be considered. First, the *Panj Piaray* at village level would be selected. The names of those wishing to do the *sewa* will be put on pieces of paper and five names will be selected by drawing lots. The village *Panj Piaray* would select the *Panj Piaray* of Akal Takhat in the same way. All villages will be run by the selected *Panj Piarays*. Selection process would be repeated after five years.

"After Punjab, Khalsa will also start preaching *Sikhi* in other parts of India. Khalsa will help the poor. Houses will be built for those without shelter. No beggars will be seen in India in the Khalsa Raj. They will be given priority. Their needs will be satisfied. Hospitals will be built for free treatment. In Khalsa Raj no pressure will be put on anyone to adopt *Sikhi*. No religion will be regarded as inferior. With Guru's blessing, some will themselves start reading and reciting Gurbani. The Khalsa method of preaching will be the proper method. Khalsa will preach in such a way that many would be attracted to *Sikhi*. There will be large camps with audio visual displays about the Sikh martyrdom tradition. The preaching will explain the power of *simran* which gave the ancient Singhs the will to undergo torture and to bear the pain in order to uphold truth and justice. At these camps, representatives of other religions will also be invited to give their views.

They will give information about their own religions and exchange views. However, while discussing and exchanging views they would themselves realise that *Sikhi* is the path of truth.

"First, Allah created the Light; then, by His Creative Power, He made all mortal beings. From the One Light, the entire universe welled up. So who is good, and who is bad?" (SGGS p. 1349)

These people of other faiths will accept *Sikhi* and the Sikh faith will spread."

Khalsa Ji said, "As one has to apply for a visa to visit another country, so people would have to apply for a visa to visit Punjab. Only a religious person would be allowed to enter Punjab (*Sach Khand* on earth). Only those who read *Bani* would be allowed to enter. No one who drinks alcohol or smokes will be allowed to enter Panjab. They would be able to go to other parts of India but not to Panjab. Anyone wishing to enter Panjab would be asked by the Khalsa embassy, "Can you speak Panjabi and read *Bani*. Only one who has faith in the Guru would be able to go to Panjab. Panjab will become a part of *Sach Khand* on earth."

The Punisher of Evil-doers: Guru Gobind Singh Ji

I asked, "Khalsa Ji, I would ask one more question. India was such a great power, how did Khalsa achieve victory?"

Khalsa Ji, "Tyrannical arrogance is not acceptable to Har Ji (God)

"Acting in egotism, peace is not obtained. The intellect of the mind is false; only the Lord is True. All who love duality are ruined. People act-as they are pre-ordained. || 1 || I have seen the world to be such a gambler; all beg for peace, but they forget the *Naam*, the Name of the Lord. || 1 || (SGGS p. 222)

"Everyone knows that there was a war between Ram Ji and Rawan. Rawan was arrogant that there was no warrior greater than him. That he had so many sons.

"Ram passed away, as did Raawan, even though he had a very large family. Says Nanak, nothing lasts forever; the world is like a dream." (SGGS p. 1429) (Note for Gurmatt research student: Compare with Gurbani confirmation, especially in Sukhmani Sahib, that the Lord is True and so is His creation. Therefore, "like a dream" according to Gurmatt should be equated to what is described as not stable (*mithia*) in Sukhmani Sahib (e.g. Astpadi 5.4&5). It is false to treat life or creation as permanent, for both will pass like a dream (if the real opportunity offered by human life is not used to achieve harmony with the Lord)).

"A fortress like that of Sri Lanka, with the ocean as a moat around it — there is no news about that house of Raavan. || 1 || What shall I ask for? Nothing is permanent. I see with my eyes that the world is passing away. || 1 || Pause || Thousands of sons and thousands of grandsons — but in that house of Raavan, the lamps and wicks have gone out. || 2 ||" (SGGS p. 481)

"He was proud that his city of Lanka was made of gold. He was also proud that he had been blessed with immortality. He thought that Ram Chandar Ji did not have any army, and that it would be easy to kill him. There were only three of them: Ram Chandar, Lashman and Hanuman. To crush Rawan's pride, Ram Chandar used divine power.

"Secondly, Daryodhan was very proud that he had on his side the great warriors and war equipment, and that the Pandav's had nothing. That he was bound to win. Daryodhan did not understand that Bhagwan Krishan did not like his arrogance. To humble him, Krishan supported the Pandavs. Daryodhan was killed with his army and the Pandavs were victorious.

"Thirdly, India too was proud that they had much power with a large army and war equipment. They too, in their arrogance, did not hesitate from attacking Harmandar Sahib. As Ram Ji and Krishan used divine powers, in the same way Guru Ji granted divine power to the *Panj Piaray* to uproot evil.

"As Guru Gobind Singh Ji granted divine power to Banda Singh Bahadur and instructed him to avenge the death of the younger *Sahibzaday* and, that no one would withstand him. Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's words are:-

"I shall give a single Khalsa the strength and courage to fight *sawa lakh* (i.e. one hundred and twenty five thousand: symbolic of unlimited courage). Only then shall I be called Gobind Singh."

"Banda Singh Bahadur did avenge the martyrdom of the younger *Sahibzaday*.

Guru Ji gave one Banda Singh Bahadur so much power that no one could stop him. The Muslims ruled the whole of India at the time. Guru Ji gave the *Panj Piaray* His own divine power.

Guru Ji said:-

"No-one offers anyone sovereignty (on a plate!)
Anyone who gets it, grabs it through own prowess."

"As Ram Ji and Krishan Bhagwan crushed the pride of Rawan and Daryodhan, so Akal Purakh destroyed the pride of these people and established Khalsa Raj."

"May my family live happily"

(*Chaopai* Guru Gobind Singh Ji)

Khalsa Ji said "The promise of Guru Ji has now been fulfilled. All sit and eat together in the morning and evening. After taking *Amrit* we are now the citizens of Anandpur. Our parents are Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and Mata Sahib Kaur. We are all the family of Guru Ji. All our worries are over. Now, *simran* will destroy all our sins and after managing own Khalsa Raj in this life, we shall achieve salvation. Now, in the Khalsa Raj, the *Panj Piaray* manage all the affairs of the Panth.

"The chosen ones are acceptable, the chosen ones are supreme. The chosen ones are honoured in the (Lord's) Court. The chosen ones look resplendent in the courts of kings. The chosen ones meditate on the Guru alone." (SGGS p. 3)

"The authority of the Khalsa shall prevail in all India. There will be parks adjoining all Gurdwaras for little children to play in." All this I was told by Khalsa Ji.

Having seen the fantastic sights of Khalsa Raj, my soul prayed, "O' True Guru! Wondrous Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, I offer you my gratitude that your words have come to pass. I have seen the sights of Khalsa Raj."

"I shall make kings of these poor Sikhs Thus shall they remember my Guruship."
(Sri Guru Panth Prakash)

Wondrous Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, bless and support your Khalsa, that these sights of Khalsa Raj (second Sach Khand) are seen by the whole world.

I regard it as important to mention that when I went for *darshan* of Khalsa Raj, of the *Panj Piaray* sitting at Akal Takhat, three of the Singhs were white. In the tunnel too, and in the Gurdwara, there were white Singhs and Singhanis. By adopting the *rehat* of Satguru Ji, they qualified for the highest *sewa* of the Panth. Why are we so lax? When are we going to understand? There is still time Sikhs, steady yourselves! Look after your Sikhi.

Difficult Journey

Today, there are many diverse organisations and institutions in the Sikh religion. However, there is no unity of direction. All are preaching their own versions of *Sikhi*.

No one is prepared to accept the Guru's Words. Every organisation is claiming to be strong and says, "We shall get you Khalistan". Khalistan will be achieved but on the strength of *Naam* and under the direction the *Panj Piaray*. Khalistan will not be achieved if separate parties keep emerging. If all unite and accept the lead of the Panj Piaray, only then would Khalistan be achieved. There is a saying that a single stick is broken easily but not if five are held together.

There is a movement for the formation of Khalistan today. How can this be, for no one is following Satguru Ji's Words, "*Rehat* and not the Sikh is dear to me". There is no concern for unity in the Panth; separate (and competing) organisations have been formed. All organisations are saying (individually), "We shall get Khalistan".

At this time the position in the Panth is serious. No one is prepared to listen to another. The demand for Khalistan is a task comparable to the crossing of a dense forest full of dangers. If we start crossing it in small groups, then we will become the victims of bandits or the prey of wild animals. We will never reach our destination and perish on the way. However, if all unite, then we shall surely reach our goal.

Sant Jarnail Singh Ji started a united movement and said, "Take *Amrit* and belong to the Guru; walk together and you will be successful. If not, then you will not get Khalistan."

In Tehran (capital of Iran), the Muslims united, ended the regime of the Shah and established their own rule. Israel was established through the unity of the Israeli people. The Muslims are better than us, who unite and live together. In the same way, Nelson Mandela united his people to free South Africa.

We should all unite. Only when we are united will Khalistan be established.

(A)

On one occasion 15 to 20 people wanted to cross a river. All sat in one boat. Four started rowing. From amongst those who were sitting, one said, "Row to the right"; another said, "No, row to the left and we will reach the other side more quickly". The third said, "Row straight." In confusion, they drifted a bit further and there was a thick fog; and they lost all sense of direction. They started arguing with each other. An elderly wise person said, "I can guide you in the right direction", but no one would listen to him, and they kept on quarrelling with each other.

Thus they forgot the way and drifted about aimlessly. They were not united and for that reason were unable to cross the river. In the same way, until such time as the Sikhs are united, how can they reach their destination? How can they establish Khalistan?

(B)

As you all know, Pralad meditated on God's Name. He had total faith in God. His father put him through many forms of torture: dropped him from a mountain, threw him in water, attempted to get him crushed under elephant's feet, but Pralad never wavered, for he had faith in Waheguru Ji. He was saved from all dangers by Waheguru Ji. In the same way, Sikhs should have faith in their

Guru. Pralad was alone; his father had great power, still he could not kill Pralad because, by reciting *Naam*, Pralad had become fearless. If we recite *Naam*, we too will become fearless. Consider this, Pralad was alone and through *simran* he obtained his kingdom. If we all unite in *simran*, we will become a major force and achieve sovereignty.

"With what effort can the kingdom be obtained (asked Dhru) and how can enemies turn friends? The Lord should be worshipped and thus the sinners also become sacred ones (said the mother)." (Bhai Gurdaas: Vaar 10.1)

One day, while playing, the child Dhru went and sat in his father's lap. His step mother, queen Suruchi was jealous and caught him by the arm and moved him away. Crying, Dhru went to his mother, queen Sunitee, and told her about the harshness of his step mother. His mother remained silent. Dhru asked, "Mother, are you a queen or a maid-servant?" His mother replied, "Son, I am a queen by birth, but in my pride I forgot Waheguru's Name; for that reason my condition is now like a maid-servant." Hearing this, Dhru was greatly disturbed. He asked, "Mother, is there a solution to this problem?" The mother replied, "Son, if we do Waheguru Ji's *simran*, then He grants all wishes. The answer to all suffering is Waheguru's Name, you too should meditate on His Name. He washes away the sins of the sinners. Grants respect to the humble. If you meditate with true heart, then Waheguru will grant all your wishes." Dhru accepted all that his mother said and walked to the jungle to do *simran* in a remote place. When his father found out, he said, "Take half my kingdom but do not go to the jungle." Dhru thought, "I have just started on my path to *simran*, and already I am getting half the kingdom; who knows, what further rewards would I get if I actually do *Naam simran*." Thinking this, he did not return. He went to the jungle and did *simran* with total devotion, regardless of physical suffering, and achieved salvation, the ultimate goal of human life. Dhru had faith in the words of his mother; he meditated and obtained his own kingdom. Why do the Sikhs not have total faith in their Guru?

Satguru Ji loves *rehat*. In the Age of Kalyug, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the Guru. However, few follow the teachings of Guru Ji. In ancient times, people would go to the forests to meditate. In ritualistic meditation, they would put their bodies through all types of self-inflicted suffering. They would do all sorts of meditation and perform austerities to fulfil their wishes. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji says:-

"Join the *Saadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy; meditate on the Jewel of the *Naam*." (SGGS p. 12)

This means, that now, there is no need to go to the jungles for spiritual enlightenment. All wishes are fulfilled through *Naam simran* in *Saadh Sangat*. If you recite Waheguru's Name then establishment of Khalsa Raj is certain.

"He alone is called a warrior, who is attached to the Lord's Love in this Yug (Age of Kalyug)." (SGGS p. 679)

"No-one offers anyone sovereignty Anyone who gets it, grabs it through own prowess."

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh
The Khalsa is of the Waheguru And to Waheguru the abiding victory

Without (Waheguru's) Name, life is wasted

The Symbol of Khalsa Raj – picture of Rehatwaan Singh



Model Gursikh of the Tenth King (Guru Gobind Singh Ji). He will receive the gift of Khalsa Raj from the True King.

Without *Naam* life is wasted

They have not accumulated the treasure of Name. How can their Panth prosper?

(You) do not meditate on the Name in the morning You are wasting your life.

Only recitation of the Name will give you peace Forget not your (true) *home* By reciting the Name you gain respect The cycle of birth and death will be terminated.

Only the One Name will go with you

All wealth will be left behind

Through good fortune did you get the human body

Do not waste it.

If you give up arrogance

You will get respect hereafter.

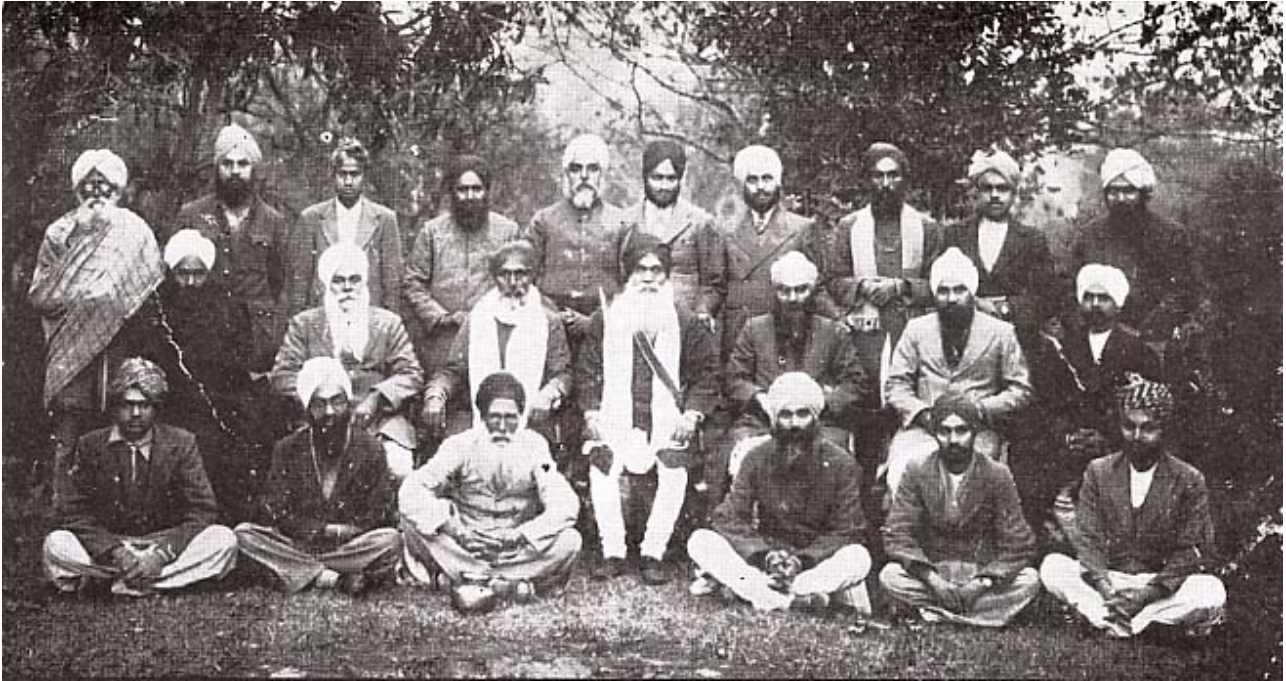
You will be freed from birth (cycle)

And always remain in a state of tranquillity.

(Bhai Rama Singh Ji)

Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji who was blessed by the Guru and always enjoyed the bliss of *Noam*. Despite spending 16 years in dark prison cells during the Indian freedom struggle, he wielded the *Khanda* (double edged sword) of *Noam* while suffering countless hardships he never deviated from the true *Sikhi Rehat* (prescribed Sikh physical and spiritual discipline).





Gursikh contemporaries of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji

Seated (left to right): Masth Ji, Subedar Harbachan Singh Ji, Bau Mal Singh Ji, Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji, Dr. Pargat Singh Ji, Giani Harbans Singh Ji Bombay, Bhagat Ram Singh Ji.

Sitting: 1, 2, 3. Baba Narain Singh Ji Kila Raipur, 4. Bhai Nahar Singh Ji, Mundia, 5. Bhai Pardaman Singh s/o Mata Kunji Ji, 6.

Standing: 1, 2, 3, 4. Bhai Gurbaksh Singh Suthrishar Ji Jamalpur, 5. Col. Piara Singh Ji, 6. Bhai Jasbir Singh grandson of Rai Bahadur Buta Singh Rawalpindi, 7. Bhai Surinder Singh Rawalpindi 8. Master Joginder Singh Barundi, 9.

GLOSSARY

Glossary of the most commonly used *Gurmatt* words (Entries in this glossary relating to *Nit-nem*, *Pan*) *Kakkar*, *rehat* and *Rehatnamas* have been abbreviated at Bhai Rama Singh Ji's request).

Prepared By: Gurmukh Singh (Ret'd Principal, UK Civil Service)

Akhand Paatth

Non stop reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji completed in about forty-eight hours; that is, on the third day from the day of the start of the *Akhand Paatth*.

Amrit

The ambrosial water (water of immortality) prepared during the Khalsa initiation ceremony of *Amrit Sanchaar*. This is also called *Khanday Baatay di Pahul*. To "take Amrit" is to be initiated into the Order of the Khalsa, the Brother/Sister-hood of the Khalsa (with spiritual parenthood of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and Mata Sahib Kaur Ji).

Amrit Parchaar

Preaching *Sikhi* with stress on Sikh *rehat* (the need to keep both, the inner and outer disciplines which a *Gursikh* is required to keep). The Sikh *rehat* has been clarified in the code of *Rehat Maryada*. *Amrit Parchaar* leads to *Amrit Sanchaar* (see *Amrit*).

Amrit Sanchaar

(see *Amrit*)

Amrit vela

Early morning when *Gursikhs* should rise and start *Naam simran*. The time of the start of *Amrit vela* is given as one and a quarter *pehar* before morning (sunrise). There are three hours in a *pehar* and eight *pehars* make a day/night period i.e. 24 hours.

Anand karaj

"Ceremony of bliss." The Sikh wedding ceremony. Congregational prayer (supplication) during which the *Sangat* (the Holy Congregation) stand up with folded hands.

Ardaas

Ardaas is said by one *Gursikh* while the others listen with intent and usually with closed eyes for concentration.

Avtaar

In Hindu ideology an *avtaar* is an incarnation of the god Vishnu. In *Sikhi*, because God is not born, an *avtaar* would be interpreted as a person with the Divine Light. In that sense only the Ten Guru personalities (of Guru Nanak) may be regarded as *Avtaars*. Otherwise Guru Gobind Singh Ji says. "Only that Being is my Guru, who is but One Avtaar from the beginning to the end of time i.e. the Unborn Waheguru." (*Aad antt ekai Avtara, so-ee Guru Samjheo hamara: Benti Chaupa-ee*)

Bani

Literal: word spoken by a divine person. Short for *Gurbani* i.e. Guru's Word. Gur-shabad means the same.

Bairag

"Bairag" or "Vairag" means deep sorrow; and in the spiritual sense it is also the longing one feels at the separation of the lonely soul from the Ultimate Truth, the Waheguru, the Lord of Creation.

Bhagti

Bhagti is the path of a loving relationship with the Lord. A *bhagat* is more a God-loving than a God-fearing person. Conversely, in a *bhagat*, God-fear is converted through *bhagti* (devotional and meditative contemplation of the God Being) into God-love. So *bhagti* is God-centred meditation, the main objective of which is union with the God-Being. Bhagti is a central theme of Gurbani. However, *Sikhi*, being a whole-life system is much more than a *bhagti* movement. It may be associated with but is not part of the *bhagti* movement of India.

Bhana

Waheguru's Will. See *Hukam*.

Bhog

(*Bhog paona*) Completion of a *Diwaan* (see below) or other Gurdwara proceedings in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. A fixed routine is followed for *Bhog* or *Bhog paona*. It will include the *Paatth* of *Anand Sahib*, *Ardaas*, *Hukamnama* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and the distribution of the sweet, holy *karah Prasaad*. The word *bhog* sometimes also is used for *prasaad*, the sweet sacrament distributed at the end of the *Bhog* ceremony, following *Ardaas* and *Hukamnama* or *Vaak*

Braham-giani

One who has attained complete harmony with The One. Ultimately, the *Braham Giani* is Waheguru Himself and no other (The 8th *Astpadi* of Sukhmani Sahib describes a *Braham Giani*).

Chanani

Canopy over the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Charan

Guru's Holy Feet. Reference to concentration in total humility on the Guru's Word i.e. *Gur Shabad*. To accept Guru's *Charan* in your mind (*hirda*) is to accept the *Gur Shabad* or *Gur Mantar* in your mind. Guru's *darshan* (spiritual and visual experience) also has a similar meaning.

Chardi Kalla

Expression of the uplifting, victorious and positive spirit of *Sikhi*. For example *Panth di chardi kalla* means the ever positive and victorious disposition of the Order of the Khalsa Panth. Never to accept defeat under any circumstances (as symbolised by Guru Gobind Singh Ji) is another way of expressing the *chardi kalla* spirit of the Khalsa

Chaur

A special appliance with a wooden handle with long hair, for waving from side to side over Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. In Panjab one can see beautiful *Chours* made of peacock feathers. A *Chaur* is a symbol of royalty when it is waved over the head of a king or some other royal personage. The *Guru Personalities* and *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji* personify The True King i.e. the *Light of Guru Nanak* in this world. (The other purpose a *Chaur* serves, especially in India, is to keep the insects away but it is mainly the symbolic aspect which is important. It should not be called a fly-whisk!)

Chawrasi laakh jooni:

Traditional Indian belief, originating from Vedic literature, in 8.4 million life forms. The human life is the most superior and is an opportunity for the soul to reach higher spiritual planes or to return to the cycle of the *chawrasi laakh jooni*. This message is also a constant theme of *Gurbani*.

Darbar

(*Guru's Darbar*) The word means a royal court. The *Darbar* hall in the Gurdwara or elsewhere e.g. at a *Gurmatt* camp, is the *Sangat* hall where there is *Prakaash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Historically, the Sikh Gurus, especially Guru Ji's from Sri Guru Hargobind Ji to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji held courts (*darbars*) in the same way as the maharajas and kings of the time. At these *darbars* Guru Sahib heard petitions, settled disputes and also received visitors and dignitaries. Indeed these were in the nature of royal courts with judiciary, legislative and political functions, despite the underlying religious language and idiom. Like Akal Takhat, they were centres of *miri-piri* (see below).

Darshan

Spiritual experience of seeing and being in the presence of Guru Ji.

Dasam duar

The "tenth gate", located at the top of the brain. The mystical opening to the spiritual experiences and the world unseen by other senses. The human soul leaves the body through *dasam duar*.

Daswandh

Sikh rehat guidance for donating of one tenth of one's net income for religious/charitable causes.

Deg

Literally is a large cooking pot and is symbolic of (Guru's) *Langar* in the Sikh tradition (*Deg Teg jag may do-oon chaalay* = The community *Langar* and the (protective) sword (of the Khalsa) shall remain in the world.) The *deg* (institution of non-discriminatory community kitchen, the *Langar*) and the *teg* or *kirpan* (sword) are both symbols of charity in *Sikhi*. See also *Prasaad*. *Dhadi Darbar* Usually held on any *Shaheedi* (martyrdom) Gurburab at which martial ballad type of poetry is sung to the accompaniment of *sarangi* (string instrument played with a bow) and *dhads* (hand-held small drums).

Dharam Raaj

In Vedic lore, the judge who sits at the gate of the next world. He looks at the account of good or bad deeds of a soul and sentences the soul accordingly, to heaven or hell or some next life form. His bidding is done by the horrible spirit creatures called *yams* (see below).

Diwaan

Sikh religious function in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji at which there is *kirtan* (Gurbani singing), and perhaps, *katha* (preaching of Gurbani), *Naam simran* and *Gurmatt* lectures. *Diwaan* is concluded with recitation of Anand Sahib (first five and the final stanzas), *Ardaas*, *Hukamnama* and distribution of holy *Karah Prasaad*. See also *Bhog*.

Duapar

The third division of time in the Vedic tradition. (See also *yug* below.)

Five Banis

The Five Banis in the morning are: Japji Sahib; Jaap Sahib; Ten Swayyas; Chaupai; and Anand Sahib (full). (Rehras or Rahiras and Kirtan Sohila are recited in the evening).

Granth Sahib

(*Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*) Sikh holy scriptures which have the status of *Jagat Jot Guru*: the living Guru, the Enlightener.

Granthi

One who reads and does *sewa* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Equivalent to a priest in other religions, although, there are no formally ordained priests in Sikhism.

Gurbani (Bani)

The Guru's word. *Gur-Shabad* means the same. The hymns in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

Gurbani Kirtan (see Kirtan)

Gur Mantar

Literally it means the mystical formula of the Guru. In *Sikhi*, the *Gur-mantar* is "Waheguru" and none other. Recitation of "Waheguru" *Naam* with total belief in Waheguru's Being (Holy Presence everywhere) and that everything seen and unseen is within His Will(*Hukam*), is more powerful than all other mystical, magical *mantars*, cult powers and superstitions, in which Sikhs do not believe. *Shabads* like *Tati waa na lagae Parbrahm sarnaee*....if read with full understanding, dispel all fears and superstitions. *Waheguru Gur Mantar hai japp haomai kho-ee* (Bhai Gurdas *Vaar* 13.2): Waheguru is the *Gur Mantar* (the Mystical Formula of the Guru) the recitation of which removes ego-centric thoughts and behaviour.

Gurmatt

Literally the word means "Guru's teaching". Therefore, *Gurmatt* is the Guru's way; it is the Guru's teaching regarding all aspects of the life of a Gursikh. If an action, behaviour, custom or procedure is in accordance with the teachings of *Gurbani*, then that is *Gurmatt*. If not then it is *manmatt* i.e. in accordance with own, self-centred and conceited approach to life. Sikh *rehat* is *the hub* of *Gurmatt around which a Gursikh's life should revolve in harmony and self discipline. Humility and sewa are the essential components of Gurmatt.*

Gurmukh

Literally, "One who faces the Guru". That is, one who follows the Guru's Word (*Gurbani*) in thought and action without reservation. Opposite of *manmukh* (see below).

Gurmukhi

Script in which Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is written. Also, the script in which the Panjabi language is most commonly written. Therefore, Panjabi is the language of Panjab, while Gurmukhi is a script. It had thirty-five letters to start with and the Gurmukhi alphabet is called *Painty* for that reason. However, five more modified letters have been added for the spelling of other (mostly non-Panjabi words).

Gur Shabad

(also see *Shabad*) Guru's Word. A hymn in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Guru

(in Sikhism) Is the Enlightener. The Guru in *Sikhi* is more than a guru (teacher) who imparts knowledge. The Guru also has the ability to change a person's nature and habits and put him or her on the path to salvation i.e. the union of the soul with the Lord, the Waheguru. Gurbani (Guru's Word) is the Guru, and ultimately, The Guru is Waheguru, the Ultimate Reality. For the Sikhs, the Ten Guru personalities of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, symbolised Gurbani Guru (*Gur Mural Gur Shabad hai*: The Guru's image is the Guru's Word - Bhai Gurdas). There was no distinction between the Guru and the Guru's Bam (Word). Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the compilation of the *Sachi Bani* (True Bani) as approved by the Guru. Passages in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji make it clear that any *bani* not approved by the True Guru Himself (and therefore not included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) is not Gurbani or *Sachi Bani* (*Satguru bina hor kachi hai bani* SGGs p. 920). Also by Guru Gobind Singh Ji's injunction, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the Living Guru.

Guru Ghar

Literally, Guru's House. *Guru Ghar* is the Guru's School or teachings i.e. the Guru's sphere of influence, the Sikh faith and way of life, as well as the Gurdwara.

Guru Granth Sahib

Sikh Holy Scriptures. See Guru above.

Gutka

Small booklet containing the daily Banis including Nit Nem Banis and special Shabads. Any small booklet of *Bani*. It is said that Bhai Mani Singh Ji, the great Gursikh martyr prepared the first *Gutkas* for ease of Gurbani reading. They must be treated with great respect and must not be handled without washing your hands and covering your head.

Haomai

Sell' centred pride in own cleverness and importance. Opposite of the God- centred quality of humility which accrues from *sewa* (selfless service). *Haomai* is a major human defect; such a disease (*rog* pronounced as *row-g*) of arrogance or conceit can only be cured through prayer (*Ardaas*) and Guru Ji's blessing. *Haomai* is lost if one understands *Hukam* (see below)

Hukam

Means "order". It also means Waheguru's Will (*Hukam Rajaaee*). The *Hukam Rajaaee* Stress of Gurbani is on understanding the *Hukam*. Such understanding and acceptance of His Will gets rid of one's *haomai* (ego-centric behaviour) replacing it with humility.

Hukamnama

The Guru's Order also called the *Vaak*. Random reading of a *Shabad* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in a prescribed manner. The meaning of a *Hukamnama* should be clearly understood because it is the Guidance of the Guru in any situation. *Hukamnama* should be heard in complete silence in a meditative pose.

Ik Onkaar (or Oangkaar)

"The Positive One and Only One Creator as described in the *Mool Mantar*" (see above). Guru Nanak Dev Ji's revelation of the God Being; the Ultimate Truth.

Ishnaan

To take a bath. In *Sikhi* cleanliness of the body is not enough; cleanliness of the mind is equally important and this is achieved by "taking a bath" in *Gur-shabad* (Guru's Word or Gurbani) and in *Naam simraan* (see below).

Jaikara

The war (or rallying) cry of the Khalsa. It may be raised by the Congregation in approval, in jubilation for the *chardhi kalla* (positive spirit) of the Khalsa Panth or in such similar event. A *Jaikara* follows the Ardaas (Supplication). One person leads with the words: *Bolay so nihaal*, whoever utters will be blessed; and the Congregation raise their voices collectively in a resounding response, *Sat Sri Akal*, True is the Timeless-Being. However, *Sat Sri Akal* is also used as a form of greeting when one person or group meets another. The other form of salutation is "*Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh*". Each person or party meeting the other, says the same words.

Jatha

A group of Sikhs, formed for a religious purpose. Not to be confused with *Sangat* or *Saadh Sangat* which is the Holy Congregation in the presence of Guru Ji (i.e. either one of the Ten Guru personalities or, these days, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). During the Sikh freedom struggle of the Eighteenth Century, *jathas* led by *jathedars* were the Sikh fighting units. These united to form the famous Sikh misls under the great Sikh sardars (e.g. Sardar Charat Singh, grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) to establish control over large territories north of River Jumna (i.e. north of Delhi).

Jeevan mukti

Salvation; the end purpose of all life represented in *Sikhi* by achieving complete harmony of the soul with the Ultimate Reality, Waheguru Ji.

Kachhera

See *Panj Kakkar*.

Kalyug

The fourth and final division of time in Vedic literature. See also *yug*, for Gurbani translation of the yugs.

Kangha

See *Panj Kakkar*.

Kara

See *Panj Kakkar*.

Karah prasaad

Sweet sacrament distributed at the end of the *Bhog* ceremony, following *Ardaas* and *Hukamnama*. See also *Bhog* above.

Kautak

Unusual event or experience caused by Guru Ji. Mysterious or unexplained spontaneous happening. Such *kautaks* by Guru Ji(s) must not be interpreted as performance of "magic" or "miracles". They did not perform miracles for the sake of it or to glorify themselves; in fact Guru Ji's were against the show of magic or miracles. However, a saintly person fully in harmony with the Ultimate Power and Reality (Waheguru Ji) sometimes becomes the medium for Waheguru's

Hukam or Will in a spontaneous way. The Will is that of Waheguru but the credit sometimes goes to Waheguru's true devotee as indeed each Guru Ji (i.e. Guru personality of Guru Nanak Dev Ji) was.

Katha

(*th* pronounced as in *theme*) Sermon on *Sikhi* covering interpretation of Gurbani, Sikh tradition and history. One who does *katha* is called a *kathakar*.

Kesh

Unshorn hair which all Sikhs are required to keep. See *Panj Kakkar*.

Keski

A small turban which is worn by men and also many *Amritdhari* women all the time. Men wear this on its own when at home or under the normal *dastar* (Sikh turban) when more formally dressed. See *Panj Kakkar*.

Khalsa

Khalsa; Khalsa Panth. The word *Khalsa* may be used for an individual or the collective body of the Order of the Khalsa. It was almost certainly used by Guru Sahiban e.g. by Guru Har Gobind Ji in a proprietary sense as *Guru's own Khalsa*. The word was in use in the land law of India at the time to indicate "that land which belonged directly to the monarch" i.e. land which was not given by the monarch to some local chief to rule over. Thus Guru's Khalsa has direct link with the Guru with no other human intermediary. Therefore the Khalsa salutation: Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh: the Khalsa is of the Wonderful Enlightener; Who is always Victorious." The word also does mean "pure" in Arabic and would also apply to the Guru's Khalsa. However, one who allows human mediation between the Guru and himself or herself, cannot claim to be the Guru's Khalsa in Sikhi. Khalsa has been defined by Guru Gobind Singh Ji as follows "Jagat Jot japay nis basar....Meditating day and night on the Light Which is Awake. Having faith only in the One and none other. Absorbed in His Splendour, and His Love; Never believing in fasts and tombs, temples or idols. Not for penances nor bathing at holy places, nor for the Yogis' self-maceration; not recognising any other but the One. When one's inner self is thoroughly illuminated with the Celestial Light; Only then can one truly be considered as Khalsa." (Sarab Loh Granth).

Khanda

Double edged sword. In paintings of Baba Deep Singh Ji, he can be seen wielding a *khanda* in his right hand while carrying his head on the palm of his left hand. It is also the *Khanda* in the centre of the Khalsa insignia called by the same name "Khanda". A shorter and broader version of the *Khanda* is used for stirring the *Amrit* water during the *Amrit Sanchar* ceremony. *Khanda* represents the Unity of Waheguru in the Sikh tradition with the two edges representing the worldly and the spiritual sovereignty of Waheguru.

Khanday baatay di Pahul

(see *Amrit*)

Kirpa

Blessing or grace. Usually used as "With Waheguru Ji's *kirpa*" or "Guru Ji's *kirpa*".

Kirpan

Sikh sword. See *Panj Kakkar*.

Kirtan

Sikh religious singing of *Gurbani* (hymns), usually with musical instruments like harmonium (*waja*) and tabla.

Kurehat

Not keeping *rehat* (see below). Breaking the code of Sikh *rehat*.

Langar

Langar, established as one of the main institutions of *Sikhi* by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, is the non-discriminatory community kitchen, usually attached to Gurdwaras. It may be run by the *Sangat* or individuals: some wealthy Sikh families have been known to run *Langars* from home, in the Name of the Guru. Indeed every Sikh is required to share his food with anyone who is in need of food, without distinction. *Langar* became one of the main institutions for fighting the evil, discriminatory caste system. Guru Amar Das Ji instructed that anyone coming for the Guru's *darshan* (holy sight) must first partake in the Guru's *Langar*. On one occasion Emperor Akbar did that with great humility. (It is due to this underlying *Sikhi* principle of non-discrimination, humility and *sewa*, that the issue of chairs in the *Langar* has become so sensitive in the Sikh community.)

Maaya (see *maya* below)

Manmukh

An ego-centric person who, through arrogance rather than through research in humility, follows the cleverness of own vacillating mind. A *manmukh* mentality, devoid of any derived experience or wisdom, leads a person astray and away from higher human values or the spiritual goal in this life.

Maryada

Tradition or the manner in which ceremonies and rites should be performed (see, for example *Rehat Maryada*). *Sikhi maryada* should not include useless rituals so roundly rejected by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. However, regrettably, many Sikhs these days, are misled by self proclaimed *sants* (saints) to follow anti-Sikhi rituals in the name of *maryada*. *Gurmatt* as determined by *Panj Piaray*, must guide *Gur Maryada*.

Matha Tekna (or *tekan*)

In *Sikhi*, paying respect to Guru Ji during the period of the Ten Gurus and these days to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji only. *Matha tekan* in the Gurdwara is performed as follows: Approach Guru Ji with folded hands, go down on the knees, balancing yourself on the palms of your hands, bow forward and touch your forehead on the ground. You then stand up, fold your hands, bow to the Guru Ji and move away. Today, this form of respect is strictly reserved for Sri Guru Granth Sahib only. (Just folding your hands and bowing your head slightly in respect for another Gursikh or an elderly or saintly person is a sign of respect and not *matha tekan*.)

Maya

God's causative power (*shakti*) of creation. In the Indian religious traditions, it is regarded as an illusion, a deception and therefore false. Depending upon the use of the word, it is mammon (false god), it is the evil influence of wealth and the man is caught in the web of *maya*. Like the word *karma* (destiny), *maya* is a very popular word in the Indian religious tradition. In *Sikhi*, only human ignorance and weaknesses allow *maya* to lead the mind astray from its true goal in this life. While accepting the need to be aware of the passing effect of *maya* which makes one forget the True Creator behind it, *Sikhi* does not subscribe to the view that creation is false, nor that the cycle of

karma may not be broken through human effort and God's Grace (*udham* and *Nadar*). God's creation is not permanent but the opportunity and *the experience it affords for the human soul to achieve salvation is real and true. "The Creator is True and so is His Creation" (This theme is repeated in Sukhmani Sahib and Asa Di Vaar).*

Miri-piri

Miri refers to mundane (worldly) participation and achievement, and *piri* to the spiritual goal of life. This is a unique feature of *Sikhi* which preaches full participation in worldly affairs (as a householder and a full member of society), and yet, combining that with spiritual *detachment* for successful pursuit of the spiritual goal of human life which is harmonious merging with the Ultimate Reality, *Waheguru*, during this life.

Naam

Waheguru's Name. Waheguru's *Being* (Timeless Spirit), the attributes of which are described in the *Mool Mantar*, the Basic Precept at the beginning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji).

Naam simran

To do *Naam simran* is to recite God's Name (for the Sikhs the most frequently used Names are Waheguru (Wondrous Enlightener) and Sat Naam (True Name of the God-Being) so that the very Presence of the Ultimate Reality (the *Ik Oangkar*, *Waheguru*. *Akal Purakh*. *Nirankar* and called by many other Names) is experienced deep in the mind or *hirda*. More than that, the whole mind and body should experience the God's Being in and around us. That is *Naam simran* with every breath for it becomes an inseparable part of one's own being. *Naam simran is God experience.*

Nagar Kirtan

A local religious procession led by the *Panj Piaray*, in which Gurbani Kirtan is done while the *Sangat* moves along slowly singing Gurbani. Devotees come out from their houses, shops etc. to pay their respects to the Nagar Kirtan. There is great religious fervour and Panthic solidarity at the *Nagar Kirtan*.

Nishan Sahib

Khalsa religious flagpole in front of every Gurdwara for the Khalsa flag. The Nishan Sahib (the pole itself), is usually covered with an orange cloth also and is tipped by a steel *khanda*. This shining *Khanda* and the orange flag can be seen from some distance (in fact from miles away in the flat countryside of Punjab).

Nit-Nem

Prescribed daily recitation of specified *Banis* (Gurbani compositions).

Paatth

Reverential reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji or any other religious work like Guru Gobind Singh Ji's *Dasam Granth*. (See also *Akhand Paatth*)

Palki

A specially constructed small bed-like palanquin on which Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is placed either in *Sukh-aasan* state (see below) or *Prakaash* state (see below).

Panj Banis

See *Nit Nem*.

Panj Kakkar

The five articles of faith which *Amritdhari Khalsa* (Singhs and Singhanis) must keep as part of the *Khalsa rehat* (discipline).

Panj Piaray

The Five Beloved Ones. The first five Sikhs who, on the *Vaisakhi* day in 1699, responded to Guru Gobind Singh Ji's call and offered their heads. They were the first five Sikhs to be initiated into the Order of the Khalsa; and, at Guru Ji's request, collectively initiated Guru Ji Himself as a Khalsa. The institution of *Panj Piaray* started with that first *Amrit Sanchar* (see above) on Vaisakhi 1699, and five *Amritdhari* Singhs/Singhanis act as *Panj Piaray* for *Amrit Sanchar* and represent the highest authority for religious and other purposes regarding decisions affecting the Khalsa Panth. The *Panj Piaray* are always *Amritdhari* and volunteer for this *sewa*. They are never elected but, if need be, they are selected by the *Sangat* or by drawing lots after *Ardaas* before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Panth

See *Khalsa*.

Parshada shakauna

A form of *sewa*, whereby *Amritdhari* (those who have undergone Amrit initiation) Singhs are invited for a meal at home.

Partakh darshan

Divine holy sight of a Guru-personality (i.e. one of the ten Guru Sahiban) or a saintly being, in reality i.e. not in a dream or imagination.

Prachar

Preaching. (See also *Amrit Pruchar*)

Prakaash/ Prakaash Utsav

Emergence of a Divine Light. *Prakaash* instead of birth is used to describe the birth of Guru Personality e.g. *Prakaash* of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. *Utsav* means function. This is because the "Guru's Light" is outside the cycle of birth and death. This must be clearly understood when we equate *Prakaash Utsav* to the "Birthday celebration" of any one of the Ten Guru Personalities from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and the institution of Adi Granth Ji (later Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) at Sri Harmandir Sahib by Guru Arjan Dev Ji in 1604 CE. *Vaisakhi* is the *Prakaash Utsav* of Khalsa (see *Vaisakhi*). "Birthday" or *Janam Din* may be convenient but can be misleading, especially in connection with "Vaisakhi" the day the Khalsa of Guru Nanak reached maturity and finally emerged (*Wah praptio Khalsa!*) as a religio-political Nation, the living image of the Guru personality. It was the day on which the first phase of Guru Nanak's mission was completed.

Prakaash karma

Refers to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji when the Holy Scriptures is open for darshan and matha tekan. The term is also used generally, when Guru Ji is available for darshan in some Gursikh's house in a special room prepared for the purpose e.g., "He had Prakaash of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in his house."

Prasaad (or parsaad) (also called Deg or Bhog).

Sweet sacrament made of equal parts of flour, sugar, *ghee* (refined butter) and water (boiling water with sugar is poured on to flour which has been fried in *ghee*), which is distributed at the

end all Sikh religious ceremonies and daily *kirtan* and prayers in a Gurdwara. *Prasaad* must be received with great respect with both hands "cupped" together and bits of it must not be dropped on the ground. Depending upon the context and spelling in Gurmukhi, the word can also mean "through the grace of" or as an expression of approval or satisfaction.

Purab (Purb)

Any major religious anniversary. Thus a Gurburab is any anniversary relating to any of the Ten Guru Ji's and Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Raaen Subaaee

All night non-stop Gurbani kirtan.

Raagi/raagijatha

Professional Gurbani singers. *Raagi jatha* is a group (usually three these days) who do traditional Gurbani kirtan (see above). Accomplished *Raagi jathas* have been highly respected in the Sikh community. There also have been many Muslim raagis of *Guru Ghar* (see above) e.g. Bhai Chaand, and these days Bhai Lai at Nanakana Sahib.

Rehat

Physical and mental discipline which a Gursikh is required to keep. Too often Sikh *rehat* is associated with the physical appearance and rituals (keeping the *Panj Kakkar*) and doing Nitnem only. Every Sikh should keep a copy of the *Rehat Maryada* and strive to practice both, the inner and physical disciplines.

Rehat Maryada See *rehat*.

Rehatnama(s)

Interpretation by ancient Sikh scholars of Guru Ji's guidance regarding *rehat*. *Rehatnam'as* are not authentic regarding Sikh *rehat* due to personal bias by the authors but have great historical significance e.g. that there was indeed a Sikh *rehat* preached by Guru Ji and that He encouraged the Khalsa to do continual research of Gurbani to interpret *rehat* (e.g. to cope with new situations). Based on the universal truths of Gurbani (the constant base), Sikh *rehat* has the capacity for continual application to new and changing social environment as the underlying principles are interpreted in terms of the changing circumstances.

Sach-khand

The Plain of Truth or the Ultimate Reality where resides the Formless Waheguru outside time and space (Sach Khand vasay Nirankar).

Saka

A sensational episode in Sikh history like the Saka of Nankana Sahib or the Saka of Jallianwala Bagh. The *sakas* and many Guru or Sikh *sakhis* (see below) are the landmarks of the most eventful Sikh history to date.

Saakhi

A historical, mythological or even fictitious story, usually with a religious moral. There are many *saakhis* (true episodes) relating to the lives of the Sikh Gurus and great Sikhs. However, there are also hundreds of teaching stones from the ancient scriptures and some of these are mentioned in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji because of their teaching content. Some *saakhis* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji

e.g. Guru Ji visit to Mecca, have become very popular and are recited daily by Sikh preachers and Sikh parents to their children. Most of these are historical as are the *saakhis* of great Sikh martyrs like Bhai Mani Singh Ji and great *sewadars* like Bhai Ghanaya.

Sangat or Saadh Sangat

Holy congregation. A gathering for religious purpose. The word has been used in the singular case as well as in the plural.

Sant

Literally, "saint", although, the word has a different meaning in Gurbani than the traditional Vedic concept of *sants*. These latter categories are roundly condemned as hypocrites who mislead people (*Oay Har ke sant na akhiay, Banaras ke Tthag*) SGGS p. 476: These are not the saints of God but the cheats of Banaras). Truly, those who go around wearing the garbs of *sants*, proclaiming themselves (in their *haomai* - ego-centricity) to be *sants*, are in fact no better than swindlers; Gurbani has not spared them. The qualities of *sants* (*sant jans*) may be found in, for example, Sukhmani Sahib, in the Astpadi relating to *Saadh* (Astpadi 7) and *Braham-giani* (Astpadi 8). These are God qualities, for only the perfect Lord can be called a perfect *Saadh*, *Braham-giani*, or *Sant*. The saintly people are those who reflect those qualities; the punishment for slandering such people is great indeed (Astpadi 13). However, there is a constant reminder in Gurbani that to place faith in any human being is useless. In fact such a reminder is placed in Astpadi 14, right next to the Astpadi (13) which warns against talking evil about the *Sant*. The *sant jans* are around us e.g. in the *Saadh Sangat*, they do not go around in fancy clothes or carrying or wearing *maalas* (rosaries - strings of beads for counting prayers).

Satguru

The True Enlightener (sat= true; guru=giver of light i.e. knowledge).

Sat Naam

The True Name.

Sat Sri Akal

"The Timeless Lord is True". Often used as a Sikh form of greeting. However, this wording is used more appropriately as the main part of the Sikh *Jaikara* (holy cry - see above) as a collective response to the leading words by one person, "Bolay so nihal", Anyone who utters will be blessed." "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh" (see below) is a more appropriate form of Sikh greeting although used mostly by the *Amritdhari* Khalsa Singhs.

Satyug

The Age of Truth. The first of the four divisions of time in Vedic parlance. See *Yug*.

Sehaj Patth

Complete, but not continuous reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib over a period of time. See also *Akhand Paatth*.

Sewa

Selfless service in total humility and without expectation of any reward. *Sewa* is a central theme of *Sikhi* and it may take many forms from cleaning the footwear of the Sangat at a Gurdwara to community service in any form. *Sewa* must be done on a non - discriminatory basis as did Bhai Ghanaya during the siege of Anandpur when he offered water to friend and foe alike. In the Sikh

tradition *sewa* may require extreme sacrifice, in such cases the person feels blessed by the Lord and offers his or her prayer of gratitude. The greater the *sewa*, the more blessed and humble a Sikh feels for being given the opportunity to do it. Such was the *Ardaas* (supplication) of gratitude by Guru Gobind Singh Ji after the return of His parents (Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Mata Gujri Ji) and His four sons (*Sahibzaads* - Princes) to Sachkhand, the Lord's Holy Presence.

Sewadar

One who does *sewa* in any capacity, official or unofficial. It is also the proper *Gurmatt* word for any person managing a Sikh institution like a Gurdwara. For example, instead of saying President or Head Manager, the *Gurmatt* designation would be *Mukh Sewadar*. One hopes this practice would spread to bring some humility amongst those who crave for high positions in Sikh institutions.

Shaheed & Shaheed Singh

The belief that Sikh martyrs continue to guard the Sikh ideals and institutions through their spiritual presence. They help Gursikhs to attain their spiritual goals.

Shabad

(Also see *Gur Shabad*) Any hymn in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Used in a deep spiritual sense as The Word which puts the soul in touch with Universal Spirit. That Word or mystical formula in *Gurmatt* is *WAHEGURU* "Waheguru Gur Mantar hai".

Sikhi (Sikhism)

The Sikh way of life. The word *Sikhi* is preferred to the more westernised word Sikhism which has a different connotation.

Simran

Meditative recitation of God's Name-Being. Any Name of God is acceptable in *Sikhi* provided the meditation is on God's Being as described in the Mool Mantar, the Basic Precept. It must not be on any other deity or being. Also, see *swas* and *swas-swas simran* below. *Waheguru*, *Sat-Naam* and *Ik Oankaar* are the most commonly used Sikh Names for the Supreme Being.

Singh(s) and Singhani(s)

Sikh men and women respectively.

Sukh-aasan

When Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is placed in a resting position for the night. See also *Prakash* this Glossary.

Swas and swas-swas simran

Swas is singular or plural depending upon the use of the word in a sentence. Literally, *swas* means a breath or the breathing process. However, the word means much more, for *swas* also carries the breath of life. So *swas* is the pulsation of life itself. *Swas-swas simran* is the utterance of Waheguru's Name with each *swas*. The *simran* becomes automatic through regular practice. It becomes part of the *swas*. When one is in this state, then *simran* is completely harmonised with the breathing and life pulsation of an individual. At the more advanced stage, speech stops and the feeling is as if breathing is rising upwards. These are the life carrying *swas*, which when they reach the top of the nose between the two eye brows (position of the *thrikuti*), an individual's thoughts stop. The mind is then completely at peace. The feeling is as if something on the *thrikuti*

is creeping upwards and it causes an itch. One keeps stroking that spot. The *swas* keep above this point. The ultimate stage is that the mystical *Tenth Gate (Dasam Duar)* which is supposed to be located at the top of the brain opens and the soul then becomes linked with Waheguru.

Treta

See yug. The second division of time in the Vedic lore.

Vaisakhi

Prakash Utsav (Purab) of Khalsa. This was the day the Order of the Khalsa was proclaimed to the world. It may be regarded as the inauguration or institution of the Khalsa. However, "birthday" would be incorrect, because the foundation of the ideology of God-centred Khalsa was laid by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the Mool Mantar. On Vaisakhi day, 1699, Khalsa had reached maturity and Guru Ji Himself took *Amrit* from the *Panj Piaray*. "Khalsa" had been addressed as such from the days of Guru Har Gobind Ji.

Vaak

(see *Hukamnama*)

Vaar

Ballad sung to popular beat and rhythm. In addition to the famous *Vaars* of Bhai Gurdas, there are many *Vaars* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji with specific instruction that these are to be sung to certain popular beats e.g. Tunde Asraje ki dhune; Malik Mureed tatha Chandra Sohian ki dhune; Rai Kamal Maujdi ki vaar ki dhune; Jodhe Vire Purbani ki dhune; Rai Mehme Hasne ki dhune; Lalla Behlima ki dhune; and, Raaney Kailash tatha Maaldey ki dhune. Unfortunately, either through neglect or through too narrow an interpretation of how Gurbani should be sung, most of these vaar dhunes have been lost to our traditional raagis.

Waheguru

From "Wah! Hay Guru" meaning "O Wondrous Enlightener"; the most commonly used Sikh Name for the God Being.

Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh

"The Khalsa belongs to the Wondrous Enlightener, Who is always victorious." Sikh form of greeting. The wording is said loudly and in a positive manner (i.e. in *Chardhi Kalla*). See also *Sat Sri Akal* above which is also used as an alternative form of greeting.

Yam

(pronounced as *jamm* with soft "j") Dark messengers of death who clutch the soul in their claw like hands and take it away to the next world; also, beings who carry out the punishment in hell

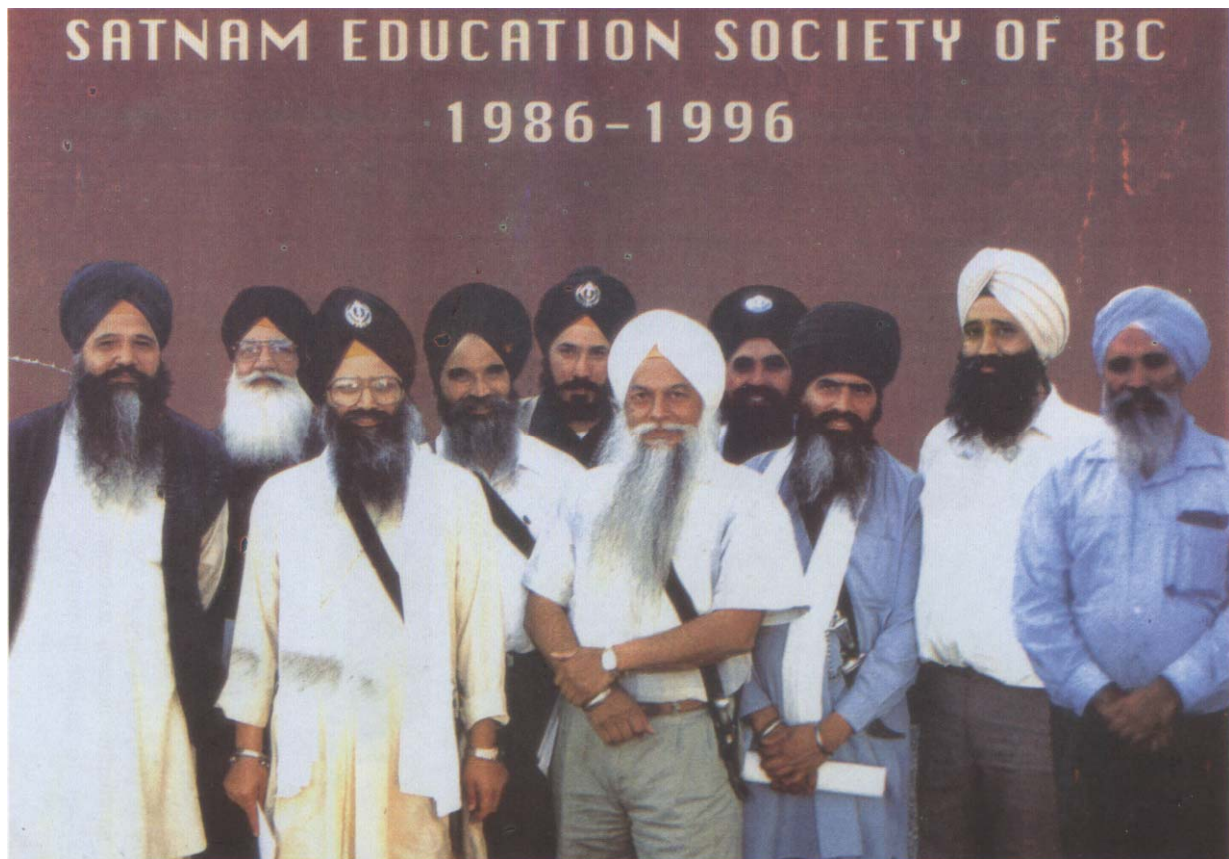
Yathra

(*th* is pronounced as in *thin*) Literally the word means pilgrimage but not in the religious sense for *Sikhi* does not accept the need for holy pilgrimages common in other religions. Therefore, the alternative meaning of Sikh *yathra* would be "A journey undertaken for the exalted purpose of understanding and studying *Sikhi* and Sikh tradition."

Yug

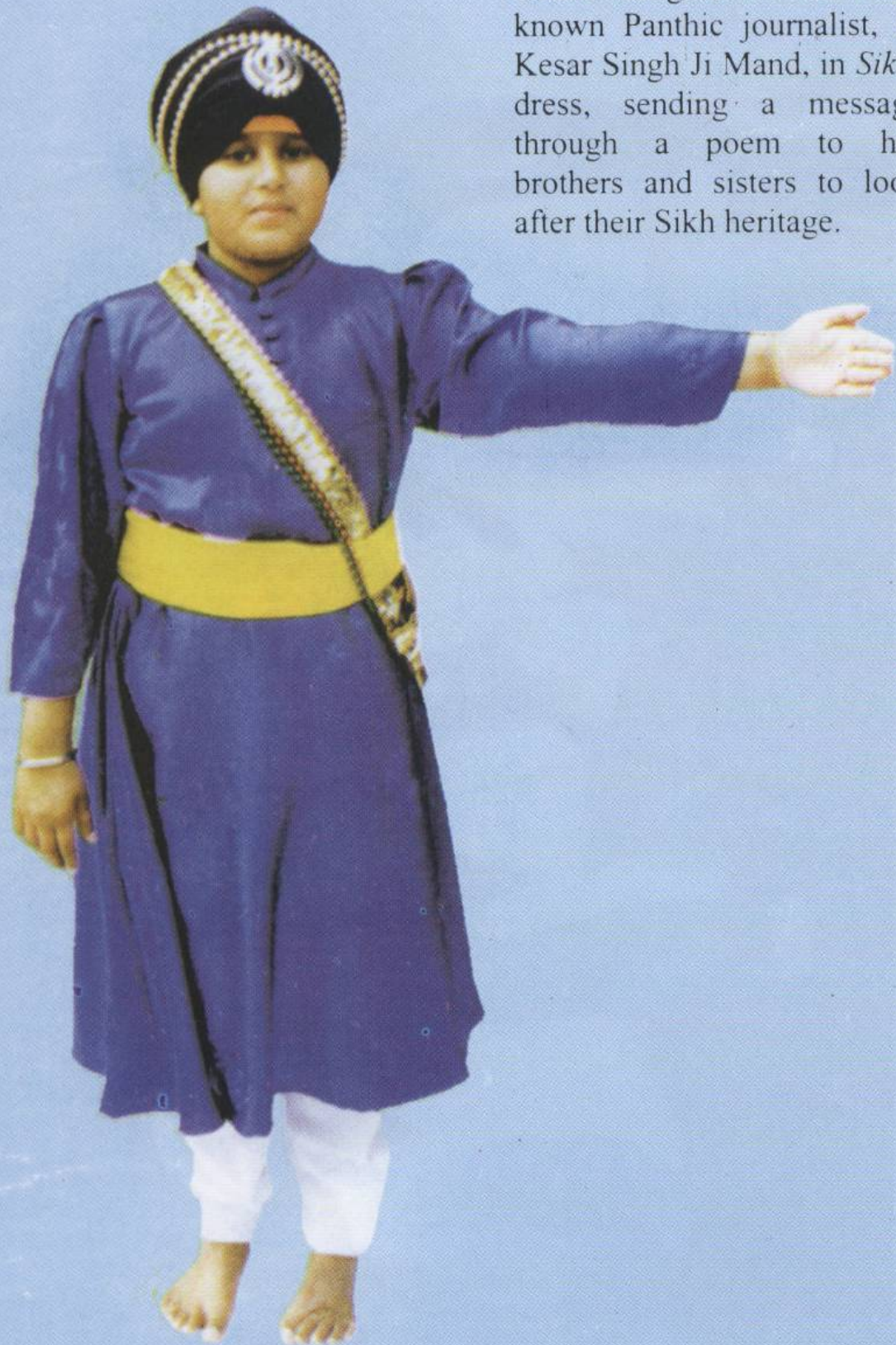
One of the traditional four ages into which Vedic literature divides time in the order *Satyug* (1728000 years), *Treta* (1296000 years), *Duapar* (864000 years) and *Kalyug* (432000 years,) (Source: *Asa di Vaar steek* by Prof Sahib Singh, Singh Bros., Amritsar).

In *Satyug* the driving force is *dharam* (desire to do one's duty and adherence to a code of conduct i.e. *rehat* see above) and the vehicle (i.e. human experience) is contentment (*santokh*); in *Treta* the driving force is chivalry (*Jor*: strength signifying the quality of the saint warriors) and the vehicle is control over sensual desires (*jatth*); in *Duapar* the driving force is high conduct (*satth*) and the vehicle is meditation (*tapp*); and in *Kalyug*, the driving force is falsehood and deception (*koor*) and the vehicle is the fire (*agan*) of desire (for more and more). Thus, Gurbani, by using the idiom of the four *yugs* and their characteristics shows the relationship between good or bad driving forces and their impact on the human being (body and mind experience), which otherwise has been mentioned as the highest life form, nay, compared with God's house: *Har Mandar* (*Har Mandar eh sarir hai gian ratan pragat ho-ay*: This body is the Lord's mansion wherein is revealed the jewel of Divine comprehension SGGS p. 1346). The *Gurmatt* teaching is that the so called four *yugs* reside simultaneously in the human body and mind. However, there is acceptance that the characteristics of *Kalyug* are predominant in the modern materialistic age and Waheguru's *kirtan* (meditative singing of His Qualities) has been offered by the Guru as the medicine for the ailing human body and mind suffering from the fire of desire.



The chairman of the Khalsa School being run in Surrey, Canada B.C. S. Ripdaman Singh (front row, second from left) and his companion Gursikhs. Sikh children are being given worldly knowledge as well as being steeped in Gurmat education.

Grand daughter of the well known Panthic journalist, S. Kesar Singh Ji Mand, in *Sikhi* dress, sending a message through a poem to her brothers and sisters to look after their Sikh heritage.



Bearing Dasmesh* Father's message, Vaisakhi is here again.
There is the sound (of rejoicing) every home, Vaisakhi is here again.

My brother came to my house one day, in the guise of a girl.
I looked at him from head to foot (in wonderment), why was he so attired ?
Wearing and earring, a hat on his head, was he not ashamed of his appearance ?
The human body is obtained through good fortune, it must not be washed away.

Bearing Dasmesh Father's message, Vaisakhi is here again.
There is the sound (of rejoicing) in every home. Vaisakhi is here again.

If returned to the cycle of rebirths (eighty-four lakh life forms),
then one will no longer enjoy the juicy food (of his Name)
When the punishment of own deeds descends on one's head (after death),
then it is too late to regret.
Good looks, youth and wealth will not stay with you (forever).
Make use of human life for without His name you will not achieve true bliss.

Bearing Dasmesh Father's message, Vaisakhi is here again.
There is the sound (of rejoicing) in every home. Vaisakhi is here again.

Prepare yourself for (the Guru's) Amrit (baptism by the double edged sword),
and become (Guru) Gobind's beloved. Erase caste-creed distinctions
and became one (in the Guru's image).
The day you take Amrit O brother, I shall adore you (like a God).
You will then be reborn in Guru's house and I shall truly be your sister.

Bearing Dasmesh Father's message, Vaisakhi is here again.
There is the sound (of rejoicing) in every home. Vaisakhi is here again.

The true Guru in full congregation, asked for one head,
and one by one he selected five Sikhs. Daya Ram fell at the Guru's feet,
"This head O True Guru is yours,
If I die at your hand then my life's destiny will be fulfilled."

Bearing Dasmesh Father's message, Vaisakhi is here again.
There is the sound (of rejoicing) in every home. Vaisakhi is here again.

The True Guru love true living (rehat of a Sikh), why not follow it. You Sikhs!
You Shun the Gurus teaching, Yet you demand Khalsa rule!
There is every bounty in Guru Nanak's house, why not have faith ?
The Guru appointed the (Beloved) Five as the leaders
to discern truth from falsehood.

Bearing Dasmesh Father's message, Vaisakhi is here again.
There is the sound (of rejoicing) in every home. Vaisakhi is here again.

* Dasmesh means Tenth Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh

Bhai Rama Singh

translation by Gurmukh Singh



Painting by the American born Bibi Simran Kaur Khalsa in which she has attempted to portray the Spiritual Light emanating from Sri Harmandar Sahib being received through Naam Simran.





Panj Piaras at the time of foundation stone of Gurdwara Shaheed Singh Singhnia in Lahore, Pakistan. From left to right; Bhai Raghbir Singh, Bhai Onkar Singh, Bhai Rama Singh (Jathedar Akhand Kirtani Jatha U.K.) Bhai Davinder Singh, all from U.K and Bhai Pritam Singh Bajwa from Norway.



Panj Nishanchees at Gurdwara Shaheed Singh Singhnia in Lahore, Pakistan. From left to right; Bhai Rajinder Singh, Bhai Tarsem Singh, Bhai Harbaksh Singh, Bhai Hardial Singh and Bhai balwinder Singh all from the U.K.



ੴ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ



ਸੰਤ ਮੰਡਲੀ ਕਰੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ
ਸੁਣ ਦਾਤੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ
ਕਦ ਤੱਕ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚੁਪ ਰਹੋਗੇ
ਕਦ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਰਦ ਸੁਣੋਗੇ

The sant congregation offers its prayers
Listen to our prayers O Lord
For how long will you remain silent
When will you heed the painful plight of your Sikhs

ਭੇਜ ਦਿਉ ਕੋਈ ਐਸਾ ਲਾਲ
ਜੋ ਪੰਥ ਤੇਰੇ ਦੀ ਕਰੇ ਸੰਭਾਲ
ਖੂਨ ਨਾਲ ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਲਾਲ
ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਾਲ

Send such a gifted leader
Who looks after the Sikh Panth
The earth is covered with blood
Oppressors have snatched away
dear sons from their mothers.

ਮੈਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੁੱਕ ਸਕਦੀ ਇਤਨਾ ਭਾਰ
ਧਰਤੀ ਹਾਏ ਹਾਏ ਕਰੇ ਪੁਕਾਰ
ਮੈਂ ਨਾ ਸਹਿ ਸਕ੍ਹੰਗੀ ਇਤਨਾ ਭਾਰ
ਤੂਫਾਨ ਆਉਂਦੇਗੇ ਵਾਰ ਵਾਰ

"I cannot carry so much burden"
The earth is crying out
"I shall not be able to carry such a heavy burden.
Storms will come again and again".

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਠੰਡ ਵਰਤਾਈ
ਕਲਯੁਗ ਘਰ ਘਰ ਅੱਗ ਲਗਾਈ
ਝੂਠ ਬੋਲ ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਬਣਨ ਸਿਆਣੇ
ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਦਰਦ ਪਛਾਣੇ

Guru Nanak extinguished the fire
Which Kalyug had started in every house
They tell lies to show cleverness
(Yet) No one feels the pain of others.

Translation by Gurmukh Singh



ੴ



ਸਤਿਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

There is but one God.

Realised through the grace of the True Perceptor.



ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ



ਪ੍ਰਭਕਾਸਿਮਰਨੁਸਭਤੇਉਚਾ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਭਕੋਸਿਮਰਨਿਉਧਰੇਮੁਚਾ ॥

Remembrance Of Vaaheguroo is the most exalted of all Duties.

By remembering Vaaheguroo many are saved.





A Few Words from Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji and Bibi Amarjit Kaur

We have been most fortunate that Bhai Sahib Ji honoured us with the *semi* of producing the first draft of this book. As Bhai Sahib Ji spoke, so we wrote. Mistakes may have been made by us in writing but not by Bhai Sahib Ji in his narration. We seek the Sangat's forgiveness for any errors. There are many spiritual experiences of Bhai Sahib Ji which cannot easily be reduced to writing. However, we have done our best with whatever intellect Satguru Ji has bestowed upon us.

We all try to hide our shortcomings but not Bhai Sahib Ji who always speaks the truth. In this book, Bhai Sahib Ji has repeatedly counselled the recitation of *Naam*. He says that our duty is to please our Spiritual Father, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and not the people. *Maharaj Ji* (the Great King) loves *Rehat* (the prescribed Sikh discipline). For a person's spiritual well-being, habitual recitation of *Naam* (God's Name) is essential. Bhai Sahib Ji has said in this publication at length, that only by reciting *Naam* can the objective of salvation be achieved. Khalsa Raj can only be achieved by reciting *Naam*.

Servants of the Sangat Sukhdev Singh and Amarjit Kaur (Southall).